

JERRY LAWLER SPEAKS OUT AGAINST ECW!

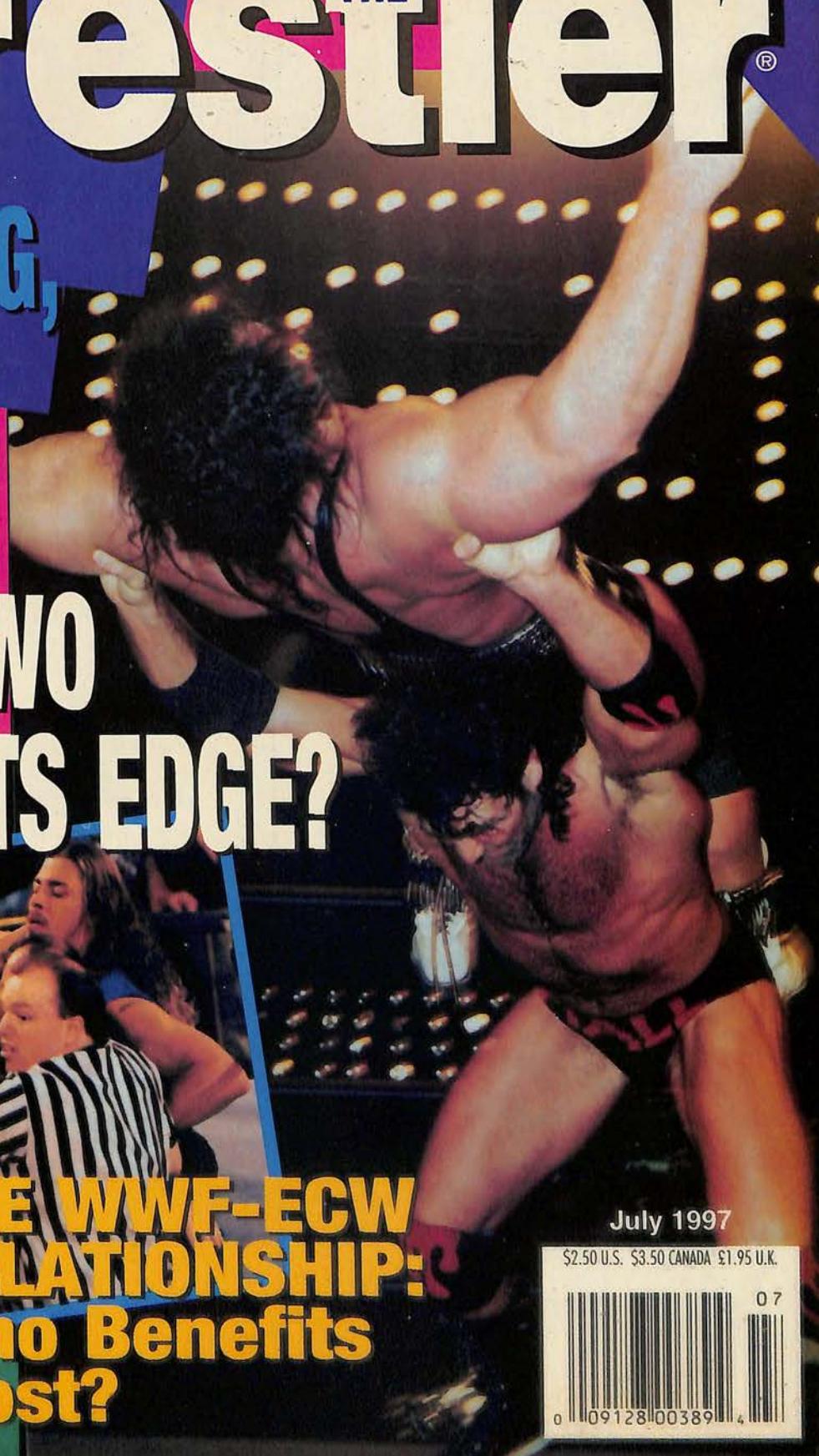
THE WRESTLER

Wrestler^{THE}

INFIGHTING,
POLITICS,
EGOS

IS THE NWO
LOSING ITS EDGE?

THE WWF-ECW
RELATIONSHIP:
Who Benefits
Most?

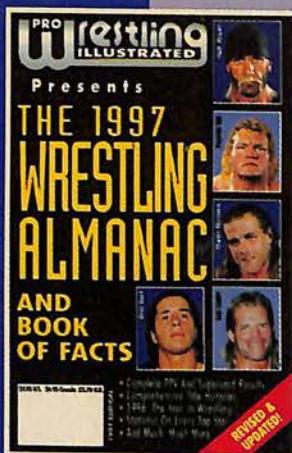
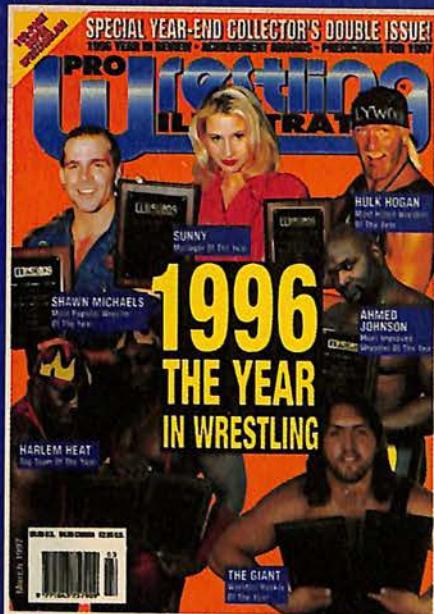


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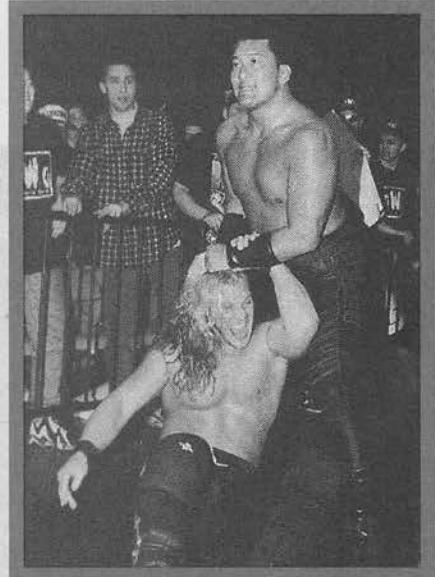
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The Wrestler

DEPARTMENTS

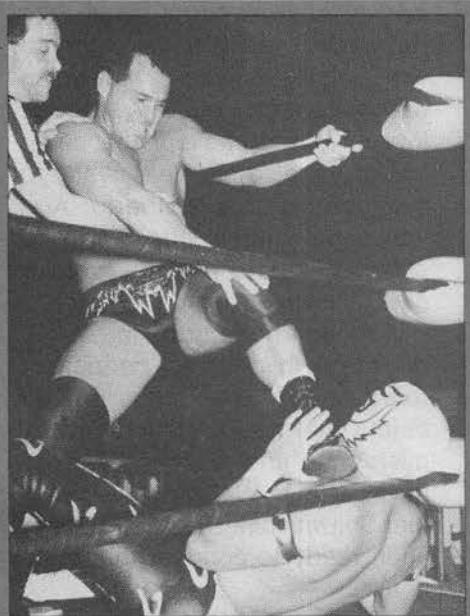
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YOUR letters

SHAWN'S FANS SPEAK

As a fan of Shawn Michaels, I was shocked and hurt when I heard he needed to take a sabbatical because of his knee injury. I think he is the most phenomenal wrestler of this decade, and he will

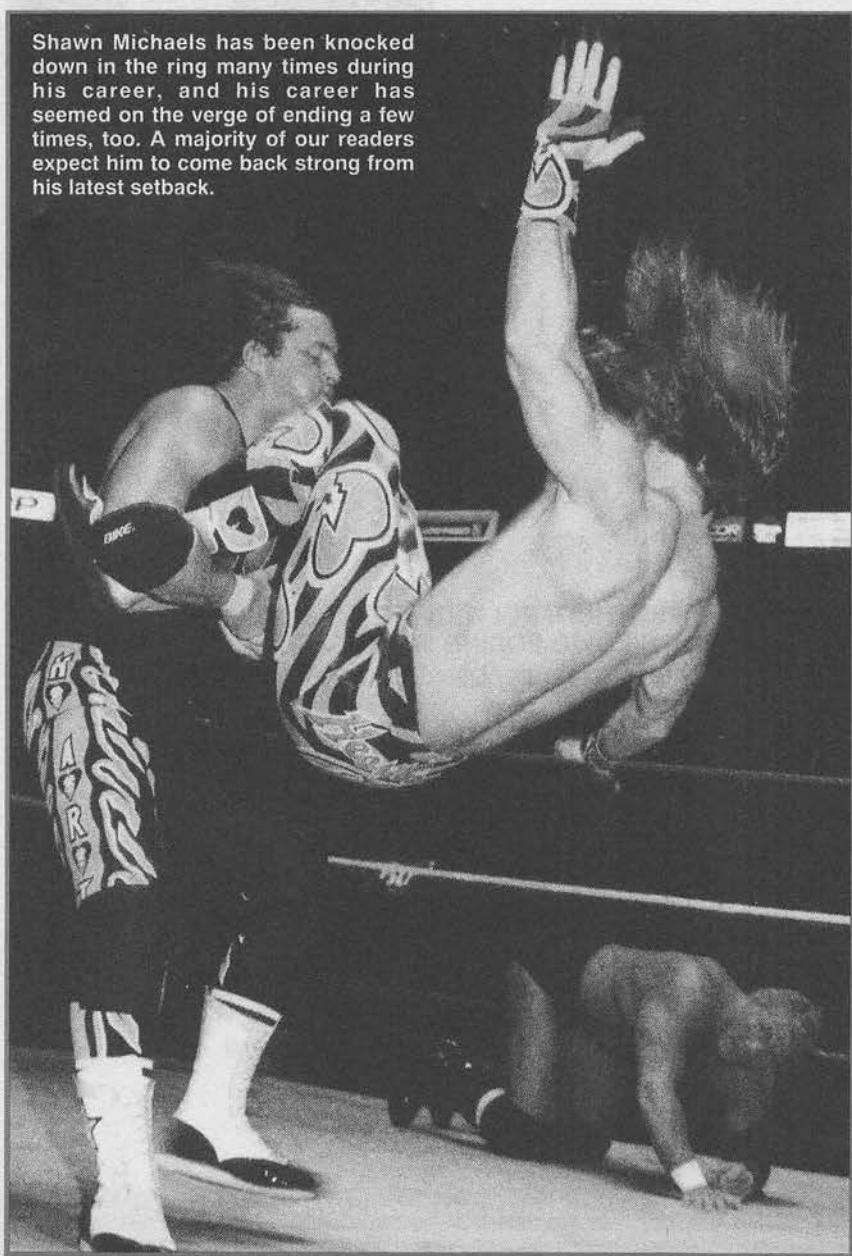
be missed. It is very hard for me to watch wrestling knowing that he will not be on the program.

Shawn always excited me with his style. He always gave 100 percent when he wrestled. His absence is easier for me to accept,

though, when I remember that he fought adversity before and succeeded in his quest to return to the ring. Above all, the thing that I love most about "The Heartbreak Kid" is his loyalty to the fans. When he won the WWF World title from Bret Hart, he dedicated the win to his fans because he knew that his "Kliq" was a big part of his success.

SUSAN WESTLAKE
Stamford, CT

Shawn Michaels has been knocked down in the ring many times during his career, and his career has seemed on the verge of ending a few times, too. A majority of our readers expect him to come back strong from his latest setback.

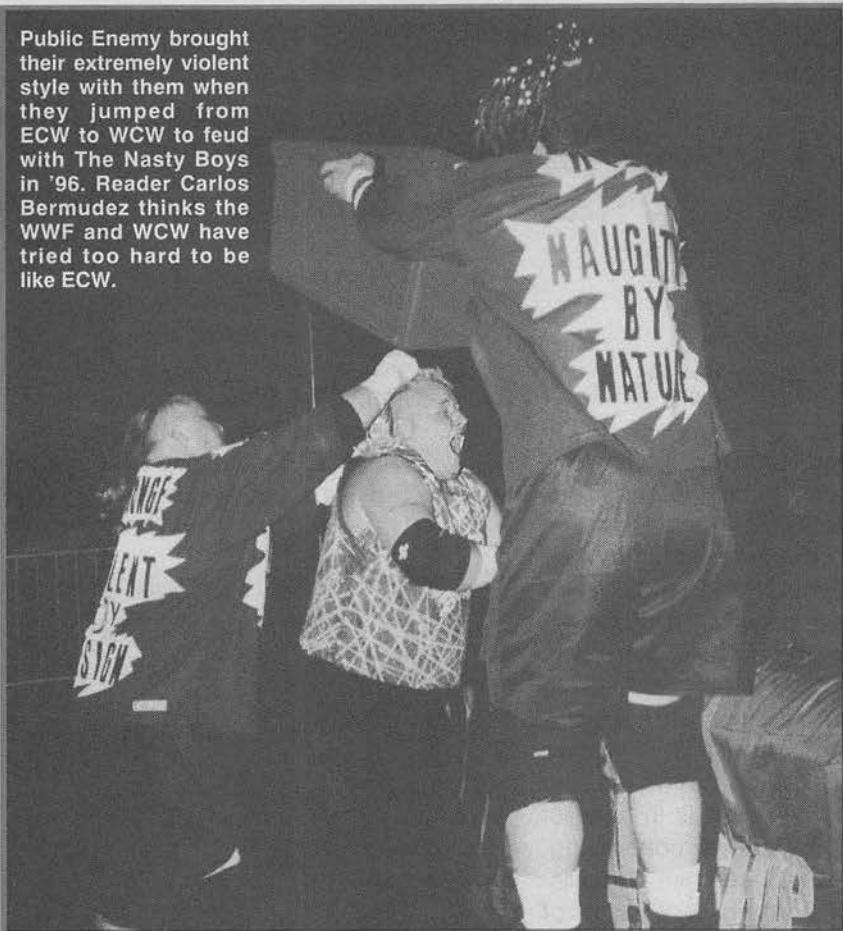


I have followed the career of Shawn Michaels, and even though I disliked him as a person, I did enjoy watching his matches. I thought Bret Hart would defeat him soundly at WrestleMania XII, but Shawn impressed me by taking Hart to the limit for an hour before ultimately defeating him to win the WWF World title. Now that he has taken a leave of absence, I do feel a bit of sympathy for him and a lot of respect. Michaels demonstrated his devotion to wrestling and his fans by taking on all challengers and showing his love for the sport every chance he could. He also showed loyalty to his mentor, Jose Lothario. And when he was in the ring, he showed why he was the premier athlete in wrestling.

Although he is gone for now, I don't think this will be a permanent retirement. Michaels has proved before that he can rebound from misfortune and reclaim his place in wrestling. We can only hope that Shawn comes back to competition ready to conquer the world again.

MICHAEL SMITH III
Bridgeport, MA

Public Enemy brought their extremely violent style with them when they jumped from ECW to WCW to feud with The Nasty Boys in '96. Reader Carlos Bermudez thinks the WWF and WCW have tried too hard to be like ECW.



ECW WANNABES?

There has been an obvious trend going on in WCW and, to a lesser extent, in the WWF when it comes to emulating ECW. Just look at WCW Uncensored and *WWF Shotgun Saturday Night* and you'll realize that both promotions have been influenced somewhat by the success and popularity of ECW.

I enjoy ECW's raunchy, extreme, and somewhat graphic nature and element. However, the "Big Two" should not have to lower themselves to a regional promotion's level to survive. WCW and WWF will always be the leaders in pro wrestling. They have the class, talent, rich history, and so much else ECW will never have, no matter how popular it gets.

WCW and WWF need to stop this degradation of themselves and the sport. Both federations were tremendously exciting and violent long before ECW was even con-

ceived. All organizations have at least one quality that make them unique. Nevertheless, the "Big Two" also have legacies to uphold.

CARLOS BERMUDEZ
Hialeah, FL

SPARKLING "DIAMOND"

It's about time "Diamond" Dallas Page is recognized by WCW, the fans, and your publications for his wrestling ability. Page's ring skills have greatly improved in the past two years, and he just keeps getting better. Page can boast about being a former WCW TV and Battlebowl champion. He could have also won the WCW U.S. title if the New World Order hadn't interfered in his title match at Starrcade. Page has shown the wrestling world that he can wrestle with the "big boys," especially now since he has publicly challenged the entire NWO.

WCW is looking for a couple of
(Continued on page 50)

The Wrestler

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WHAT'S Happening

By Bill Apter

ALL THE MEETINGS in dark hallways the past few months ... all the sightings of them together ... all the rumors and gossip ... now we finally know the truth about "Diamond" Dallas Page and Kimberly. For months they denied that they were "an item" again, but after they reunited in March at Uncensored, they admitted to everyone that they have been married for five years.

"When Randy Savage showed the layout of me and Kimberly in *Playboy's Nude Celebrities* on TV, he revealed she was my wife," Page said. "That ticked me off real bad, because he's got no business talking about my personal life, but when he and Elizabeth spray-painted Kimberly and me with the NWO logo, all I could think about was protecting my beautiful wife and getting her out of danger."

"We never told anyone about the marriage because we wanted

to keep our private life just that—private. Hell, we've had some real bad fights that led to a few separations, but in the end, it's the two of us together, baby, forever!"

Regarding the *Playboy* layout, Page said, "We're real proud of it. Kim was invited to be in there with class babes like Pamela Anderson and Jenny McCarthy. There is no shame in what we did."

Bret Hart is in need of some career counseling. Did you see him go ballistic, hitting WWF Hall of

Famer Pat Patterson, then cursing Vince McMahon after he lost a March 17 cage match to "Psycho" Sid (who got an assist from The Undertaker). Years ago, when

Randy Savage and Elizabeth revealed to the world at Uncensored that Dallas Page and Kimberly are husband and wife by showing everyone a magazine for which they posed together (below). They followed that up by spray-painting the two of them (right).



past WWF stars such as Bruno Sammartino and Bob Backlund went through tough times and had trouble dealing with all the pressure and frustration, they had manager Arnold Skaaland to turn to. He helped them to calm down and deal with their problems in a rational manner.

I'm now convinced that Bret needs someone like Skaaland to help him out. Maybe he could use



Could legendary WWF manager Arnold Skaaland help Bret Hart to control his anger? He might be able to help, but Skaaland said he'd have no interest in managing the "Hitman."

worked years to create."

Teddy Long is very excited about the progress **Ice Train** has been making in WCW lately.

"Train is coming along real well with the new training regimen I have developed for him," Long said. "It's taken a while to get the promoters to see what a great young talent he is, but a few of the WCW matchmakers told us that they are very impressed with his current winning streak and might elevate him to face better opponents soon."

Here's some distressing news: **Steve "Dr. Death" Williams** was arrested in March, along with two others, at a Laredo, Texas, airport.

Ace Darling and Devon Storm are good friends who wrestle as a tag team quite often. That doesn't mean they don't enjoy wrestling each other, though. Darling beat Storm for the New Jack City light heavyweight title in March, but regained it the next day.

the help of Skaaland himself. He does still work for the WWF as a talent scout, after all.

"I've known for a long time that Bret was a time bomb just waiting to explode," Skaaland told me when I asked if he would consider managing Bret. "I'm always on the road with the WWF, and lots of guys come by and ask me for advice. Bret never has, though. Not once. He'd rather brood and not talk about things. That's not very healthy. He could become as out of control as Steve Austin unless someone helps him."

"Manage him? If he asked, I would probably turn him down. He's been in this sport too long to change his ways and follow someone else's advice now. I started with Bruno and Backlund early on in their careers. The only person who can probably get to Bret right now is his dad, Stu. Stu's a good man, and he knows this sport as well as anyone. Maybe Bret's not too old to get a good slap in the face by his dad and be told that he's destroying a reputation he

Agents alleged that they were traveling with a large quantity of pain-killers.

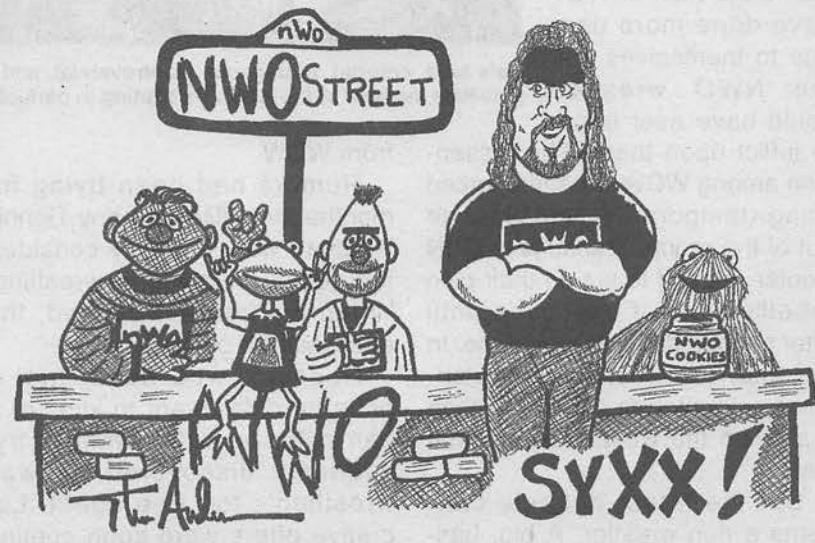
They're frequent tag team partners on the East Coast independent circuit and good friends, but **Ace Darling** and **Devon Storm** still say they enjoy competing against each other every chance they get.

(Continued on page 52)



Steve Anderson's View

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NO Holds Barred

with Steve Anderson

FOR NEARLY ONE year now, WCW has been under fire from a renegade organization called the New World Order. The WCW stars have tried to stand up to these thugs, but the veteran and youthful stars of the NWO have been for the most part too much for them to handle. Hulk Hogan and his henchmen have dominated the battles since July 1996.

But the composition of the NWO has little to do with WCW's strategic shortcomings. The way I see it, the men of WCW have done more damage to themselves than the NWO wrestlers could have ever hoped to inflict upon them. The dissension among WCW wrestlers forced Sting (temporarily) and Savage out of the group. The suits in CNN Center refused to act on their own rebellious chief executive until after serious damage was done. In the end, Eric Bischoff's punishment amounted to little more than a slap on the wrist. More on that later.

But the latest debacle concerns a non-wrestler. A big, basketball-playing fish that got away



He's bold, colorful, outrageous, controversial, and a little nasty, and now Dennis Rodman is a part-time member of the NWO. He's fitting in perfectly already.

from WCW.

Rumors had been flying for months that NBA bad boy Dennis Rodman was seriously considering getting involved in wrestling. When his interest peaked, the offers started coming in.

Rodman, who never met a groin he didn't want to kick, or a hair color he didn't want to try, suddenly discovered he was wrestling's top free agent. Lucrative offers were soon coming the way of the controversial hoops

star. Frankly, his final selection was no shock to me.

Dennis Rodman, meet the New World Order. Once again, WCW was left in the dust by wrestling's most influential non-organization. I guess Rodman had no problem accepting Ted DiBiase's dirty money.

Now professional basketball's premier thug is part of professional wrestling's premier band of thugs. Rodman has found a home in the

(Continued on page 54)

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THE NWO'S INVASION of WCW has been a big story for almost a year now. ECW's invasion (if you could even call it that) of the WWF came on a much smaller scale, but it is also proving significant.

There is another invasion that is even less noticeable, but it might turn out to have bigger consequences than even the first two. It is the invasion of the Amazon women.

It started in WCW, where Kevin Sullivan, to counter Woman's desertion of him for Chris Benoit, brought in Jacquelyn, formerly known as Miss Texas in the USWA. More than a typical beautiful valet, Jacquelyn sports a muscular physique comparable to that of any female bodybuilder.

She puts that physique to work during Sullivan's matches. Rather than simply offering Sullivan moral support, Jacquelyn regularly beats up on his opponents who happen to fall outside the ring. No surprise, though, that she likes to mix it up: As Miss Texas, she became the first female wrestler ever to crack the "PWI 500." Jacquelyn's exploits are striking, but we knew of what she was capable.

The WWF's resident Amazon, Chyna, was much more of a mystery, but one look at her and it's easy to see she is capable of a lot: The woman is an absolute powerhouse.

For weeks, Chyna appeared at ringside, her menacing glare focused intently on the action. Her attack on Marlena established her as a rulebreaker, and when we discovered she was an ally of Hunter Hearst Helmsley, one thing became certain: HHH had found himself a powerful weapon in his war against Goldust and other fan favorites.

Currently Jacquelyn and Chyna stand without peer in their respective federations. What else could Jacquelyn do but challenge the men of WCW? Madusa surely could give her a challenge, but Madusa's caught up in a feud with Luna Vachon. I've heard she has an open contract and is willing to wrestle any man in the federation, but so far she hasn't found a taker. As for Chyna, she could benchpress Sunny, Sable, Marlena, and Howard Finkel at the same time. Heck, how

many WWF wrestlers want to mess with her?

It's too early to see, of course, whether the activities of Jacquelyn and Chyna constitute a trend, or merely a fad. Many fans still view them as way out of the ordinary ("Is Chyna a man?" is one question I saw on the Internet). There is no doubt, though, that while these women have unfortunately taken the rulebreaking path, they are serious and determined athletes.

And there are hundreds of women out there like them. Such women might be new to the squared circle, but female bodybuilding has gained wide acceptance as a legitimate sport over the past decade. Society as a whole still has a hard time accepting women with muscles, but more little girls are growing up believing it's okay to develop their bodies as well as their minds.

Surely, many of those girls and women are wrestling fans who are watching very closely to see if Jacquelyn and Chyna do well. If they do succeed, the sport could see an influx of "megawomen" who would change the way we look at valets, and at women's wrestling. Muscle doesn't necessarily improve grappling skills, but it would offer an intriguing new dimension to female competition that in North America suffers from a lack of interest.

Meanwhile, Jacquelyn and Chyna continue to make news. I just wonder how long these headstrong women will be content to play a subordinate role to Sullivan and Helmsley, respectively. It's easy to see both of them breaking away and testing the limits of their abilities while pursuing their own ambitions. And if they eventually win over the fans' hearts, that Amazon invasion would come a lot quicker.

For now, though, it's just fascinating to watch Jacquelyn bodyslam a man while wearing an evening gown, or Chyna fight off six referees and assorted officials at once. It's a big change all right, and one that Sullivan and Helmsley might not have anticipated.

In their search for a competitive advantage, these women might have started a mini-revolution. □



Did Jacquelyn start a trend?

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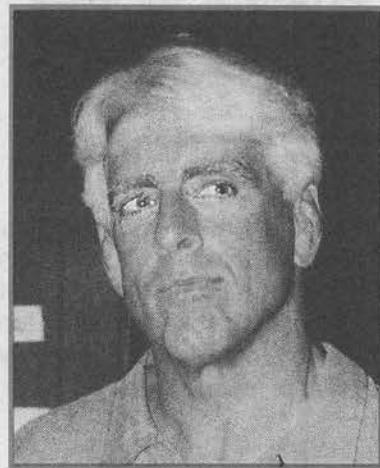
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THUMBS UP



Thumbs Up to Ric Flair. Since when is the "Nature Boy" so generous? Maybe since Roddy Piper arrived in WCW. Flair watched with great interest in early-March when Piper put together his four-man team that was to do battle with Team WCW and Team NWO at Uncensored. It consisted of Piper, John Tenta, and two rookies. Not exactly a superteam. Flair recognized that this was a disaster waiting to happen, stepped in, and offered Piper the services of the Horsemen for one night. Though we would have rather seen Piper's team and WCW's team joining forces against the NWO, it is nice to at least see Piper and Flair working together for a good cause.

Thumbs Up to Steve McMichael. There are actually two reasons why we're saluting "Mongo" this month. First, he is really starting to show us that he is a good wrestler. He gets better with almost every match. More importantly, though, he has finally accepted Jeff Jarrett as a member of The Four Horsemen. It took a number of arguments and a couple of matches between the two for McMichael to realize that Jarrett is, indeed, an outstanding athlete and a good man to have on his side. Maybe "Mongo" isn't as stubborn as we thought. And maybe he and Jarrett can now make a run at the WCW World tag team title.



Thumbs Up to Paul E. Dangerously. And to all of the ECW wrestlers for adding some excitement to *Monday Night Raw* with their appearances in late-February and early-March. Okay, so maybe the WWF powers weren't thrilled with ECW's violent style of wrestling, but shouldn't they have known what they were getting? The fact was that the ECW wrestlers spiced up a show that needed some spicing up. The WWF would be making a big mistake if it didn't invite them back to future shows. As for the ECW men, they proved they could play in the big time ... big time!

Thumbs Up to Davey Boy Smith. It was great seeing the old "British Bulldog" wrestling in Germany back in February. He still gets cheered a lot on that continent, and we think he likes it. He didn't do much cheating in the finals of the WWF European title tournament, when he took on his brother-in-law and tag team partner, Owen Hart. He beat him cleanly in one of the best WWF matches of the year. It's beginning to look more and more like Davey Boy wants to be a full-fledged fan favorite again, but in order for that happen, he might have to split with Owen. That'd be okay with us.



THUMBS Down



Thumbs Down to Randy Savage. One of these days, we're sure the "Macho Man" will regret spray-painting "NWO" on Dallas Page's back. In fact, we're sure Savage will regret joining the NWO once he sees how his career goes nowhere and he is forced to take a backseat to Hulk Hogan and The Outsiders. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised by Savage's outlandish behavior, but we thought he was mature enough—experienced enough—to have learned a few lessons from his career. Apparently, however, Savage has learned nothing from all his years in the ring, and that's just inexcusable.

Thumbs Down to Gorgeous George III. Showing absolutely no respect for his "heritage," Gorgeous George III was recently stripped of the Southern Championship Wrestling heavyweight title when he failed to defend the belt within 90 days of winning it. Gorgeous George must be turning in his grave, even if he is, as we suspect, no relation to his namesake. If you're going to take a name, have respect for that name. Maybe there's a reason we haven't seen a Lou Thesz II or Ric Flair Jr. There's a responsibility that goes with being Gorgeous George. One of those responsibilities is wrestling once in a while.



Thumbs Down to Dean Malenko. Well, the three-time former WCW cruiserweight champion has gone completely berserk. One night after losing the belt to Syxx, Malenko went on a rampage, forsaking his intelligent mat style for a wild, all-out, and violent attack on Ultimo Dragon. First, he clotheslined Dragon after Dragon offered his hand. Then he choked Dragon even after the referee told him to stop. Fine. Let Malenko get out his aggression any way he wishes. But we have a feeling that a 5'9", 216-pound brawler isn't going to get very far in WCW. Perhaps Malenko should sit down, relax, and think things through.



Thumbs Down to Sunny. Okay, the woman is getting us really angry. We admit it. The very sight of Sunny trying to cheat her way to victory in several arm-wrestling contests with Marlena left us absolutely seething. Can't she do anything without cheating? We've always said there's nothing worse than wasted talent ... except for wasted intelligence. Maybe Sunny is spending too much time looking in the mirror and not enough time planning her career. Something is very wrong here and we think the problem might be Sunny taking shortcuts to stardom. A career has gone far off the beaten path. It's too bad.

C O R R E S P O N D E N T S

Reports

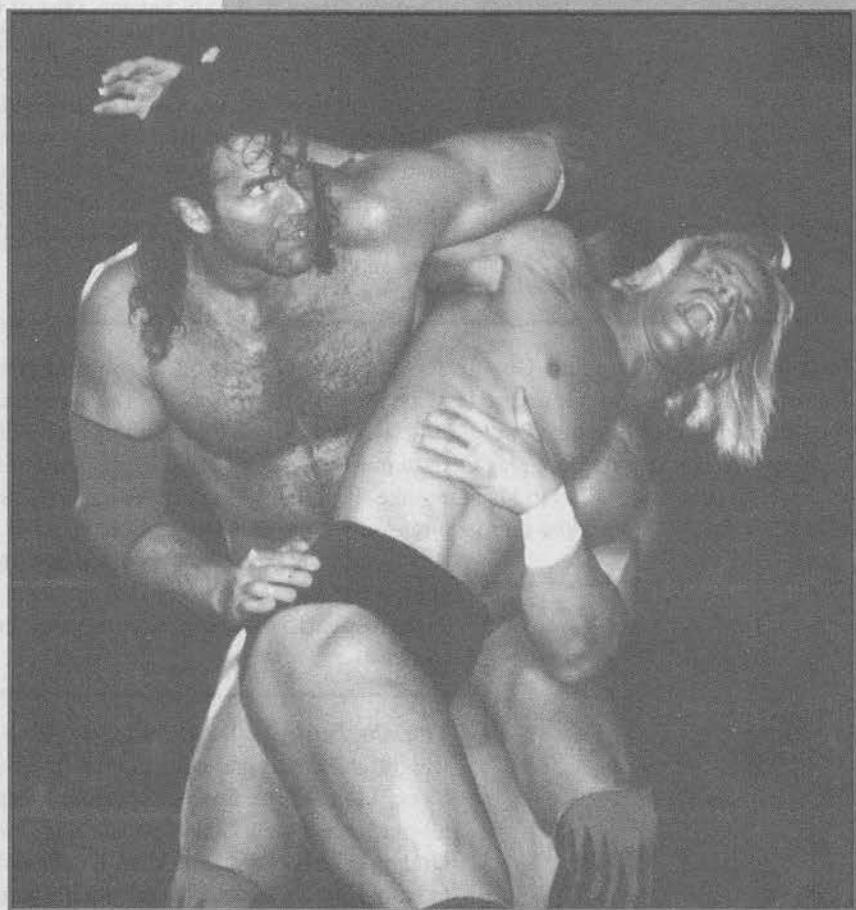
Florence, SC (Correspondent—Brandon Turbeville): The Giant and Lex Luger are so anxious to hurt NWO members Scott Hall and Kevin Nash that at times they seem to forget about their goal of winning the WCW World tag team belts from them. This match between the two teams at the Civic Center was no exception, as it ended with Hall and Nash getting the victory by disqualification.

Neither team was able to dominate the bout for any extended periods. For a while, the two teams just pounded each other with hard fists and solid kicks. It wasn't too long before all four men got involved at the same time and started fighting both inside and outside the ring.

At one point, The Giant grabbed one of the World tag team title belts from a table at ringside and whacked Hall over the head with it. The referee saw this and disqualified The Giant and Luger, but they weren't finished. After the bell had already sounded, The Giant choke-slammed Hall while Luger caught Nash in the "torture rack."

In other bouts: Jeff Jarrett pinned Bobby Eaton ... Chavo Guerrero Jr. defeated Konnan ... Marcus Bagwell beat Rick Steiner ... Billy Kidman defeated Eddy Guerrero by disqualification ... "Diamond" Dallas Page pinned Randy Savage (with Elizabeth).

Reading, PA (Correspondent—Nicholas Kemp): It seems as if Boogie Woogie Brown and Jacques Bonet can't corner



Scott Hall uses an abdominal stretch on Lex Luger during a WCW tag team title match. Luger and his partner, The Giant, got the best of Hall and Kevin Nash in the end, but they lost by disqualification.

Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling tag team champs Ace Darling and Mark Mest long enough to get a pinfall victory over them. On this night, the duo had to settle for a countout victory.

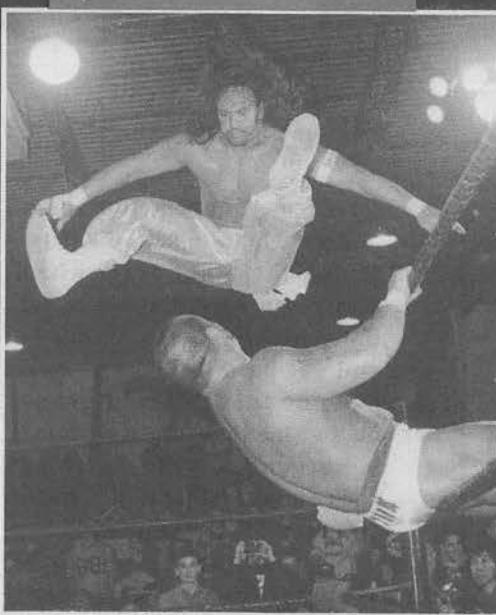
Brown and Darling faced off first, and both played to the crowd, with only Brown receiving the fans' approval. Agitated by the crowd's boos, Darling tagged in Mest, but Mest found himself on the losing

end of a test of strength with Brown.

Both Brown and Mest then made quick tags, but Bonet entered the ring first and locked Darling in an armbar. Ace quickly countered, backing Bonet into the ropes before unleashing a series of kicks and punches on him. Bonet fought back, though, bodyslamming Ace and getting a quick

(Continued on page 56)

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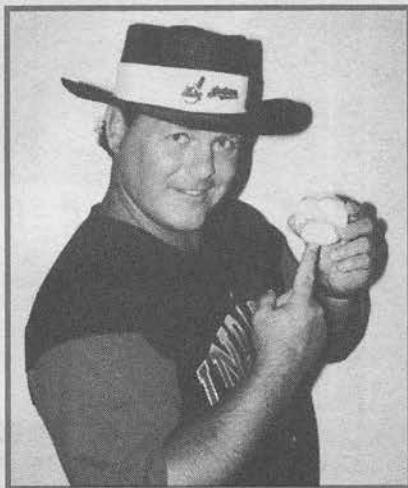
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YOU Asked US



Jerry Lawler isn't shy about showing his loyalty to baseball's Cleveland Indians. He'd love to play first base so he could hassle opposing players who get hits.

Q: "I have a question for Jerry Lawler: I know you're a big baseball fan, and I was wondering, if you were a professional baseball player instead of a wrestler, what position would you play, and what team would you want to play for?" —Kenneth Egan, San Jose, CA

A: "I happen to be a very good baseball and softball player, Kenneth," Lawler replied. "I could probably play the game a lot better than a lot of those overpriced, spoiled, pampered guys you see in the Major Leagues today. If I were a baseball player, you'd definitely see me with the Cleveland Indians. They're the best team in the world. I'd love to play first base

for them. The first baseman always gets to talk to the players on the other team when they're on base. I could stand there heckling guys all day—and get paid for it! Can you imagine that? They'd get so mad at me that they'd be turning around to yell something back at me, and we'd pick them off first base. It'd be great!"

• • •

Q: My question is for Tommy Dreamer: "You have been both a friend and an enemy of The Sandman over the last three or four years, so you must know him well. Does he drink and smoke all the time? Could you ever drink as much as him?" —Adam Grant, Broomall, PA



Tommy Dreamer doesn't often down a few beers before his matches the way The Sandman does. He knows Sandman well, though, and knows he could never drink as much as him.

A: "I tell you, Adam," said Dreamer, "I have known the guy for a long time, and I still don't really know where he's coming from. He's one of the toughest guys I've ever met, but also probably the craziest. I've seen him smoking and drinking literally at all hours of the day and night. I heard he puts beer on his cereal sometimes, but I don't know that for sure. I like beer, too, and me and Sandman have had a few together, but I never saw anyone keep up with him. It's not worth your time to try. It's just the way he lives his life. I don't think any of us in ECW is the best role model, and Sandman would probably agree with me on that, but we just do what we do. It's like we always say: ECW's not for everyone."

• • •

Q: "My question is for Sunny: It's been so long since you've managed anyone full-time. You were voted Manager of the Year in PWI last year. When are we going to see you sign some wrestler and lead him to the top of the WWF?" —Barry Brennan, Sioux Falls, SD

A: "Yeah, everybody misses me," Sunny said. "I got a lot of fans out there who ask me the same thing, and all I can tell you is I'm real busy, but I'm always scouting, babe. I do a little broadcast-

(Continued on page 58)

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JUNE 1995

APRIL 1996

JULY 1995 INSIDE WRESTLING is a power-packed 88-page (including four color pinups) that included our popular "Wrestling Cool" section. Who's the coolest dude, babe, crippler, and daredevil? One thing all our readers agreed on: This issue was cool!

OCTOBER 1995 INSIDE WRESTLING reports on the state of affairs of World Championship Wrestling for the first half of 1995 in "WCW Midyear Report." We tell you how the stars fared among the turmoil in this special 88-page edition that includes four full-color pinups.

WINTER 1995 INSIDE WRESTLING gives you the birthdays of more than 180 of the hottest wrestlers in the sport today in a special pullout calendar and datebook. This book also features great historical information for each month!

APRIL 1996 INSIDE WRESTLING presents the third edition of the Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament, and the results just get more startling each year! The highlight of this annual 88-page special, as our readers have told us, is the computer-generated centerfold action shot from the tournament final.

JULY 1996 INSIDE WRESTLING takes you away from the wrestling ring and into the personal lives of wrestling's hottest stars. What makes Sunny cry? What's Sabu's favorite TV show? What's the dumbest thing Shawn Michaels has ever done? What scares Jim Cornette? What brings Sting down? This 88-page includes color shots of Sting, Sunny, Sabu, and Michaels.

Introducing

PRINCE IAUKEA

By Dan Murphy

WHEN PRINCE IAUKEA stepped into the ring to face Lord Steven Regal on February 17, you had to figure that many of those watching *WCW Monday Nitro* decided to flip the channel to catch what was happening on *WWF Monday Night Raw*. Just another easy win for Regal, right?

When those channel-surfers returned to *Nitro*, they learned two important lessons: First, never take any match for granted, and second, Prince Iaukea is no prelim bum.

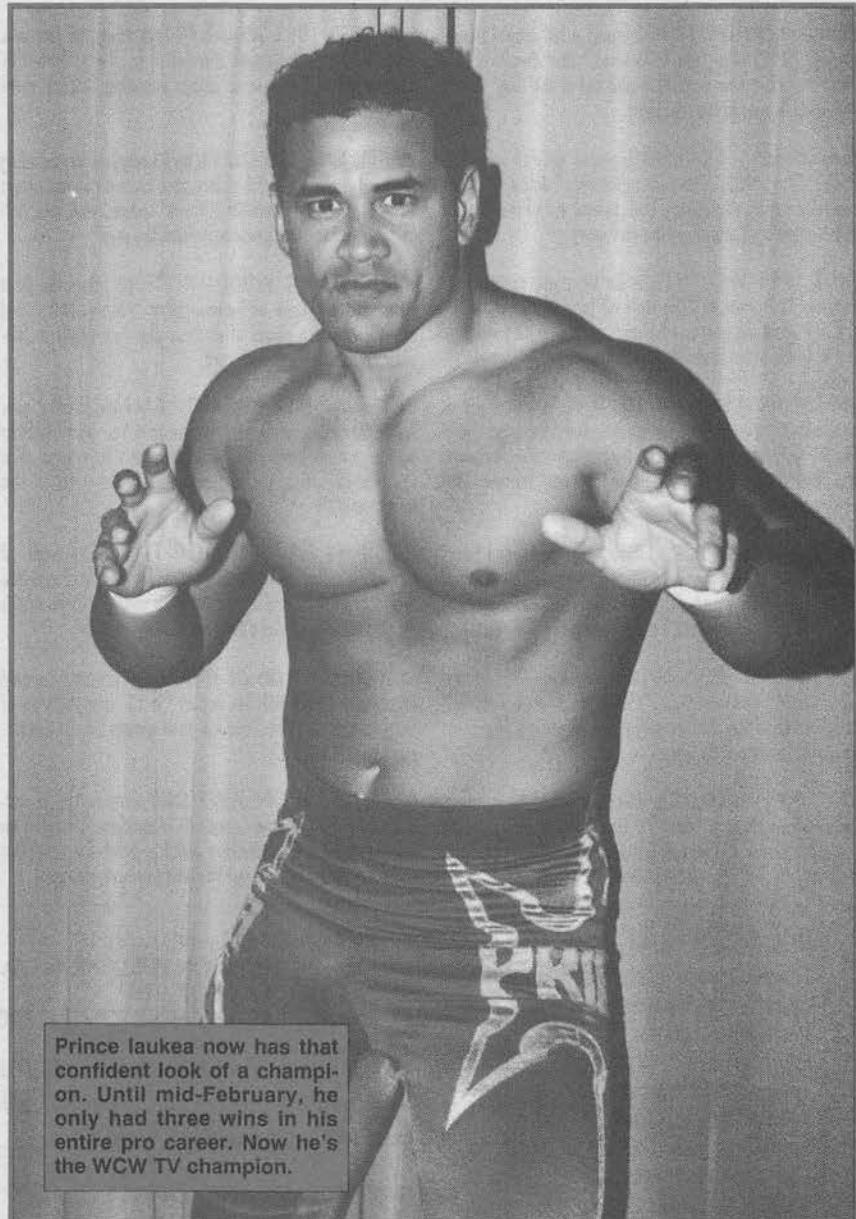
"I am very proud to have won such a prestigious title as the WCW TV title, especially over a competitor as talented as Lord Regal," Iaukea said recently. "Maybe some people considered it an upset, but I knew I had a chance."

When one considers Iaukea's background, it's hard to believe that anyone would have written him off as quickly as they did.

Iaukea was born in Oahu, Hawaii, and moved to Manua, American Samoa, while he was still very young. His exposure to the mat sport only went as far as the high school level until his brother decided to become a pro wrestler. His brother, you see, was trained by Boris and Dean Malenko.

"One day, I stayed at the gym to watch him train, and I got hooked," Iaukea said. That same day, I asked the Malenkos if they'd work with me, too!"

Iaukea trained only briefly with the Malenkos, as family problems



Prince Iaukea now has that confident look of a champion. Until mid-February, he only had three wins in his entire pro career. Now he's the WCW TV champion.

Before February 17, 1997, few wrestling fans knew who Prince Iaukea was. Now he is not just a star in the making—he's the reigning WCW TV champion!

back in Manua forced both him and his brother to return to the Islands.

"I didn't want to stop training," Iaukea said, "but family is more important." After seeing Dean Malenko compete on *Nitro* early last year, Iaukea decided the time was right to finish what he started.

He prepared a videotape of his training sessions and sent it to the WCW Power Plant in Atlanta. The folks there liked what they saw.

"I doubt I would have ever gotten a break if it wasn't for the Power Plant," Iaukea said. "I can't imagine there's a better training school out there, and without the skills I learned from guys like Terry Taylor, Jody Hamilton, Pez Whatley, Mike Winner, and Dwayne Bruce, I wouldn't be holding this TV title."

Iaukea made his pro debut in April of 1996 against Kevin Sullivan. It was a tough introduction to his new profession.

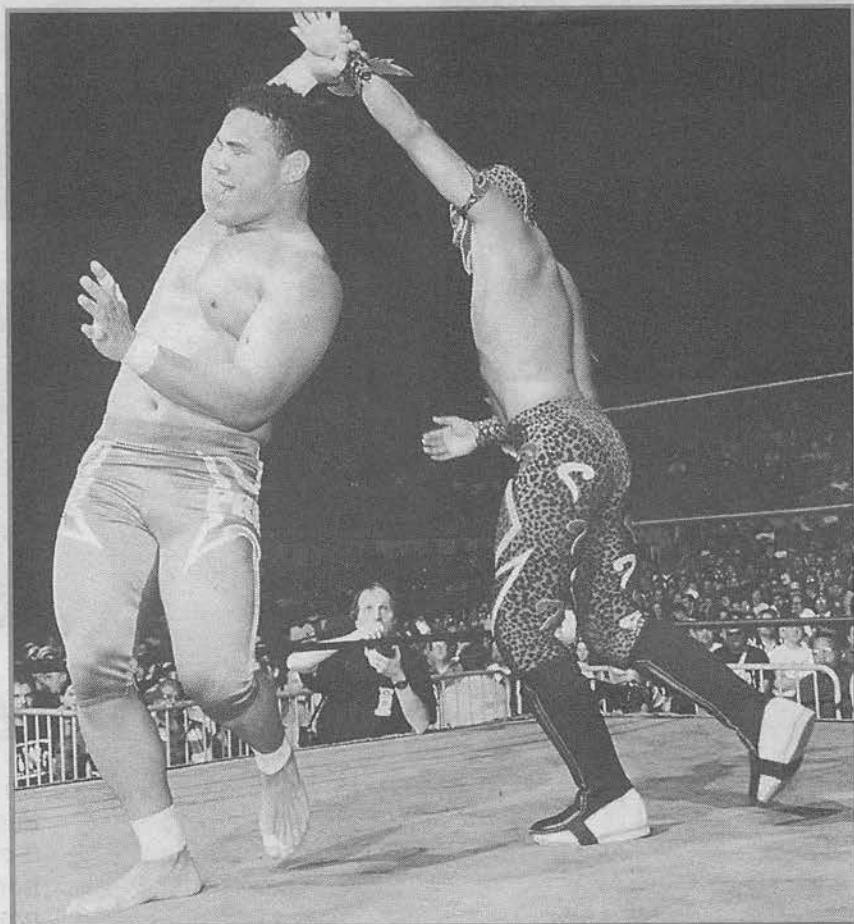
"I went in there looking forward to trying out dropkicks and armbars," Iaukea laughed, recalling his naivete. "Before I knew it, I was hanging upside-down in the Tree of Woe! That was certainly a learning experience."

Iaukea wrestled Sullivan a few more times, and he never did get to try out those dropkicks and armbars. He also wrestled Arn Anderson, "Diamond" Dallas Page, and Hacksaw Duggan. Loss, loss, and loss.

"It was very tough, spending all of that time working out, and losing my first few matches," Iaukea said. "Then one day, Dean saw me and told me to relax and wrestle at my own pace. He told me that I could go far if I could just wrestle with more confidence and concentrate on my technical game."

Malenko's advice turned things around for the youngster. Iaukea decided to incorporate more of his aerial skills into his matches, and he ditched traditional wrestling boots for a barefoot style.

Iaukea then sought matches with



Iaukea battles Rey Misterio Jr., the man who helped him to beat Lord Steven Regal for the TV belt. The high-flyer beat Misterio in the SuperBrawl VII match after Regal interfered, then offered to give Misterio the belt.

some of WCW's less-experienced wrestlers and earned victories over The Gambler, Manuel Fernandez, and Navy Seal (his only three pro wins before he met Regal).

In February, promoters offered him the TV title match.

"When I got into the ring for that match, I knew I wanted nothing more than to walk out of that ring with the belt around my waist," Iaukea said. "But I know no one else believed I had a chance. They thought it was just a tuneup for Regal for his match with Rey Misterio at SuperBrawl."

Regal was his usual cocky self in the match, manhandling Iaukea with a series of European uppercuts and keeping him on the mat for most of the match. Then Regal made a rookie mistake of his own, allowing himself to be distracted by Misterio, who had come to

ringside during the match. As Regal began taunting Misterio, Iaukea rolled up His Lordship and won the belt. Six nights later, he beat Misterio after Regal interfered, though he offered to give Rey Jr. the belt when he found out his win was tainted.

"I realize that both Regal and Misterio are in line for title shots now," Iaukea said, "but I have no intention of becoming a pawn in their feud. I have defended the belt against Super Calo, Juventud Guerrera, and Squire David Taylor, and I am going to do everything in my power to keep this belt around my waist. But I must do it the right way."

With his confidence intact, and his experience adding up, it should be a long time before anyone considers a win by Prince Iaukea to be a huge upset again. □

JERRY LAWLER

Q

U E S T A

Q U E S T I O N S



ASK JERRY LAWLER a straight question and there's a good chance you'll get ... an answer. An entertaining answer, certainly. Perhaps a very long one, too. But when it comes to answering straight questions with straight answers, Lawler prefers a wayward route. Of course, eventually he comes around to the truth—his truth.

Lawler loves answering questions about the present, which has him holding the USWA heavyweight title for the 25th time. As for his long-standing feud with Bret Hart and the Hart family, well, Lawler has rewritten history on that one. Officially, Hart has dominated and often embarrassed Lawler. But unofficially, in the world according to Jerry, the Harts are running scared.

In his dual life as dominant USWA wrestler and outspoken WWF commentator/part-time wrestler, Lawler has never kept an opinion to himself. His latest very public opinion concerns the appearance of ECW wrestlers on WWF cards. Lawler hates ECW and thinks the WWF has no business doing any business with any renegade or independent federation ... except for the USWA.

Well, we'll let Lawler explain this in his own way. Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum spoke with Lawler and reported that the man "kept my tape recorder running. I had it on 'voice-activated.' It never deactivated."

Q: A lot of people think that your opinion of ECW ...

A: You mean Extremely Crappy Wrestling? That's what it is, you know. Extremely Crappy. And it's really not wrestling. It's more like a fire drill.

Q: So you think ECW is too extreme?

A: No, I think ECW isn't wrestling. It's something else, but I don't know what it is. All I know is that any federation where Paul E. Dangerously can make a living can't be any good and can't be wrestling. ECW is the home of all the lunatics in the world who can't abide by the rules of civilized wrestling.

Q: Well, some people have said you don't always abide by the rules ...

A: Like when?

Q: Like when you've used closed-fist punches ...

A: Never done it. Not once in my life.

Q: Or thrown fire.

A: Can't throw fire. It's a proven scientific fact that fire can't be thrown. However, you can set fans on fire, as ECW has proven. You know, you have to wonder about the business sense of setting your fans on fire, especially when you can fit every

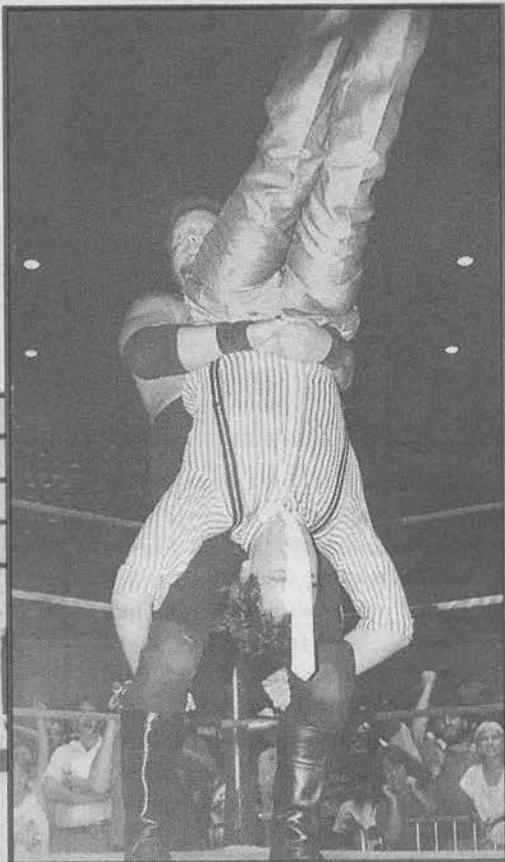
one of them into a barn.

Q: You don't even like ECW Arena?

A: ECW Arena isn't an arena. It's like a barn. It's an outhouse. Yeah, they should call it ECW Outhouse!



The history between Lawler and ECW's Paul E. Dangerously dates back to the late-1980s. The two of them had some battles in Memphis TV studios (above) and a few in the ring, too (top right).



Q: C'mon, Jerry. This really sounds like sour grapes.

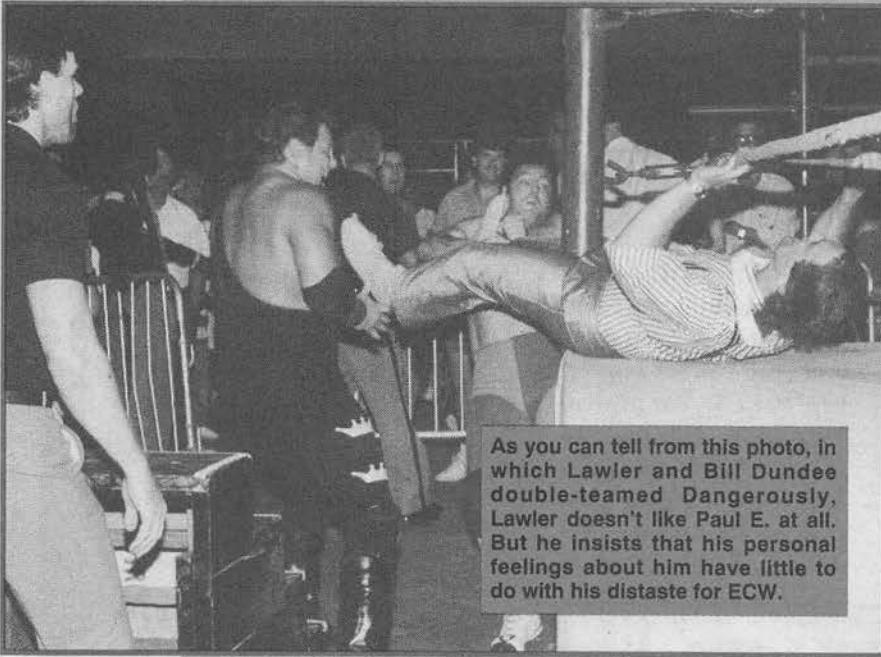
A: This isn't sour grapes. No way.

Q: It has nothing to do with McMahon forcing you to share the microphone with Paul E.?

A: McMahon can't force me to do nothing. It's just that I wasn't relinquishing the microphone so that Paul E. could have it all to himself.

Q: So the reason you hate ECW is a personal thing, because you hate Paul E. Isn't that fair to say?

A: Let me tell you something, Dave: Paul E. Dangerously was an egotistical punk when he got his start in Memphis, and he's an egotistical little punk now. He knew nothing. He didn't know the business, he didn't know anything about anything, so he tried to leech along, always taking advan-



As you can tell from this photo, in which Lawler and Bill Dundee double-teamed Dangerously, Lawler doesn't like Paul E. at all. But he insists that his personal feelings about him have little to do with his distaste for ECW.

Meanie? Come off it! This is a time when the WWF should be raising the bar, but we're lowering it instead, and any vermin can get over it. What's the WWF gonna do next? Set the Silverdome on fire? Give every fan a baseball bat with barbed wire wrapped around it? Hey, I'm all for a fair amount of violence in wrestling, but what's the point here? *ECW is not wrestling!* It's nothing but a bunch of slimeballs crawling out from under a rock, and now the WWF is inviting them in. Tell me, Dave: Do you invite the rodents and roaches into your house?

Q: Of course not. They just show up uninvited.

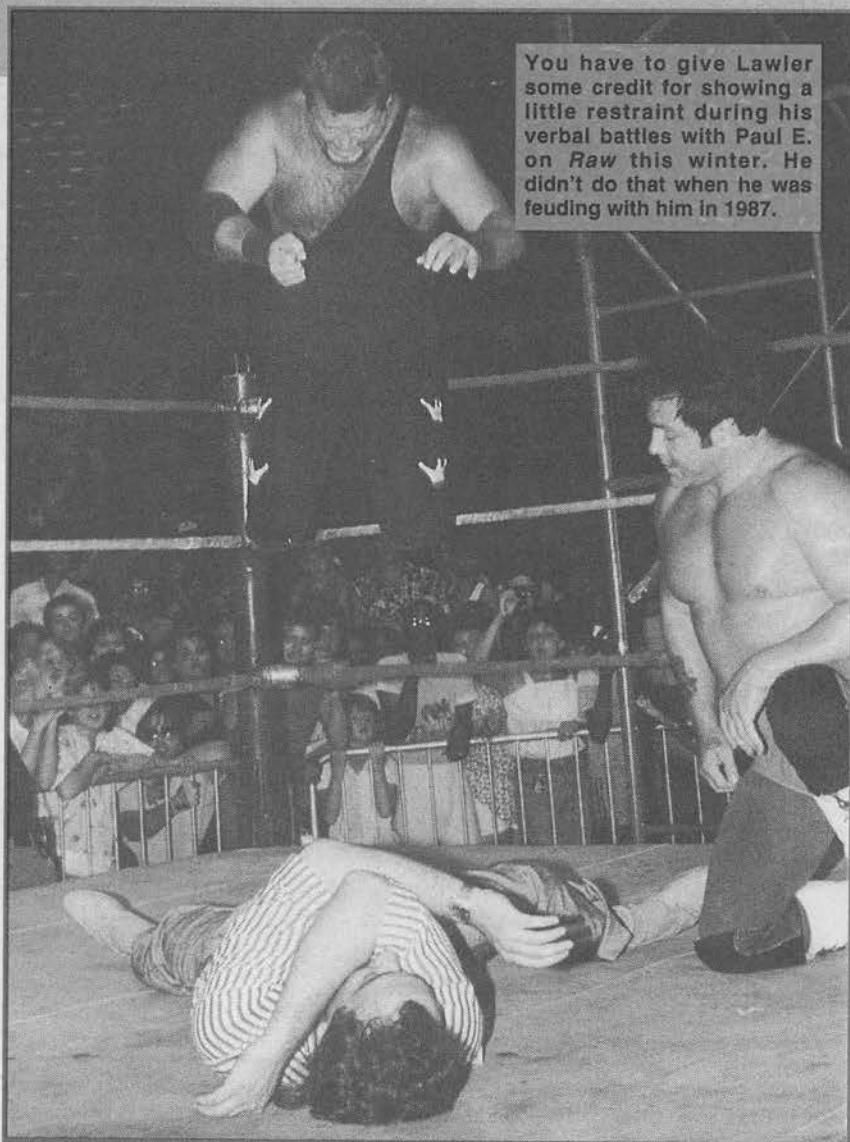
tage of people. You want me to be honest with you? I've never liked the guy, not one iota, and I never will. Wrestling would be a much better place without people like Paul E., and fortunately there aren't too many people like Paul E. He's a one-of-a-kind zero, that's all. I remember that one time when I broke his jaw with a punch. Well, Dangerously must have a glass jaw, 'cause I didn't even hit him that hard.

Q: Yet, Dangerously keeps mocking you.

A: He threatened to go to his lawyers. That's the way these guys always are. They talk a big game, then they can't back it up, so they go running to court. Well, he didn't, because he didn't have a leg to stand on, and he knew it.

Q: I'm still not convinced that your hatred for ECW isn't just a result of your hatred for Paul E.

A: Draw your own conclusions, but that has nothing to do with why I think the WWF shouldn't get into bed with ECW. In my mind, the WWF is lowering its standards by allowing ECW wrestlers on *Monday Night Raw*, and they're not getting anything in return, just raising the level of ECW. Sandman? Tommy Dreamer? Raven? The Blue



You have to give Lawler some credit for showing a little restraint during his verbal battles with Paul E. on *Raw* this winter. He didn't do that when he was feuding with him in 1987.

A: Well, this is worse. The WWF is inviting the roaches and rodents into its bed.

Q: Sounds disgusting.

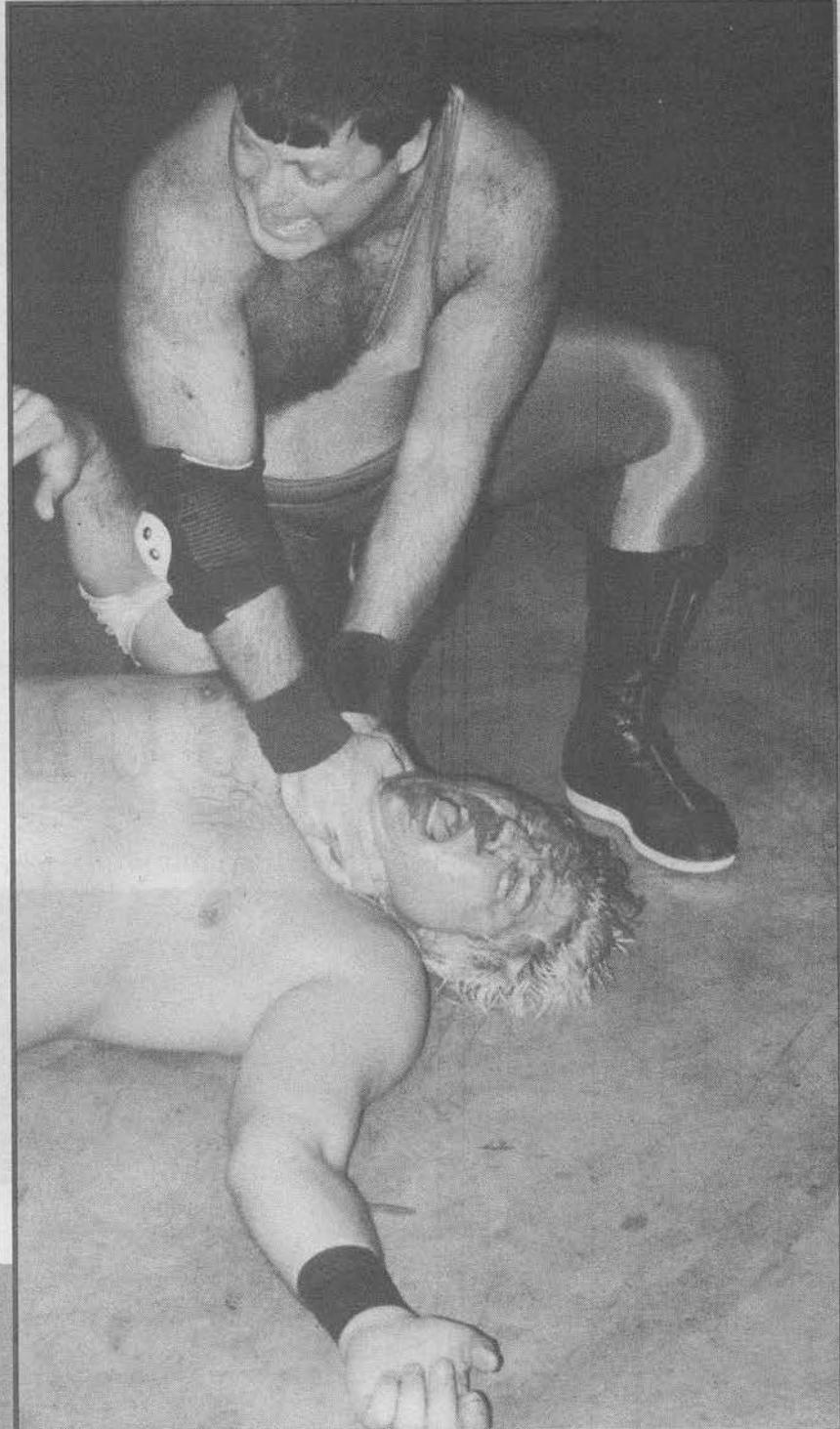
A: It's worse than disgusting. ECW is a freak show, and its fans are sick people who like freak shows. They oughta be going to the carnival, watching the bearded woman or the two-headed man, but instead they watch ECW. And who are these people? How many fans does ECW really have? That outhouse can't hold more than 1,100 people.

Q: Well, it holds a little more than that.

A: A little more? My point exactly. The WWF has always represented wholesome family entertainment and the best wrestlers in the world. The ECW represents the slime on death row. And let me tell you something: WWF fans want WWF wrestling, not ECW. If the WWF wants empty arenas, why don't they just have me yell fire next time?! Heck, the ECW fans'll come pouring in!

Q: But explain something, Jerry. The WWF has had USWA wrestlers on its cards, and WWF wrestlers have been on USWA cards. The USWA has had barbed-wire matches and falls-count-anywhere matches ...

A: I knew you were going to ask that question. Let me explain: First of all, the history of Memphis wrestling goes back decades, and our wrestlers are among the best in the world. They deserve an occasional chance in the spotlight. I don't expect them to be acknowledged as USWA wrestlers when they're in the WWF. Second of all, we only have barbed-wire and falls-count-anywhere matches in the USWA when a feud has to end, when it just can't go any further. It's a last resort. In ECW, it's a nightly event. The idea of an ECW card is for as many wrestlers as possible to bleed as much as possible. The WWF wrestlers actually help and improve our USWA cards when they're on them. It's a natural match. ECW cheapens the



Lawler chokes Tommy Rich, who's now affiliated with ECW, during a bloody USWA match from a few years ago. "The King" acknowledges that the USWA does have some violent specialty matches, but not nearly as often as ECW.

WWF. Even mentioning ECW cheapens the WWF.

Q: Well, you've made yourself quite clear on that, so let me ask you one more thing. Is there anything worse than ECW and Paul E. Dangerously?

A: No, and only one thing comes close: Bret Hart, although I hear

he even agrees with me on this ECW issue.

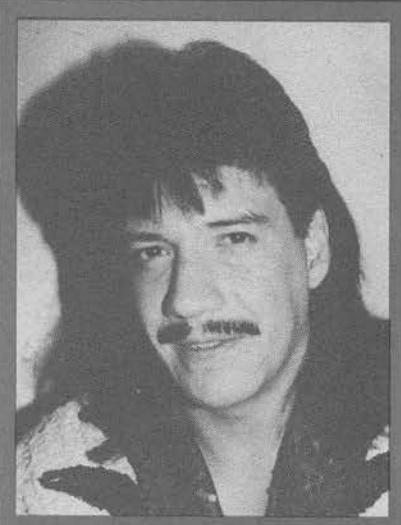
Q: Jerry, we'll end this interview on that note. Thanks for your time, and I look forward to hearing your commentary on future ECW matches in the WWF.

A: I don't look forward to doing that commentary. □

X
THE WRESTLER

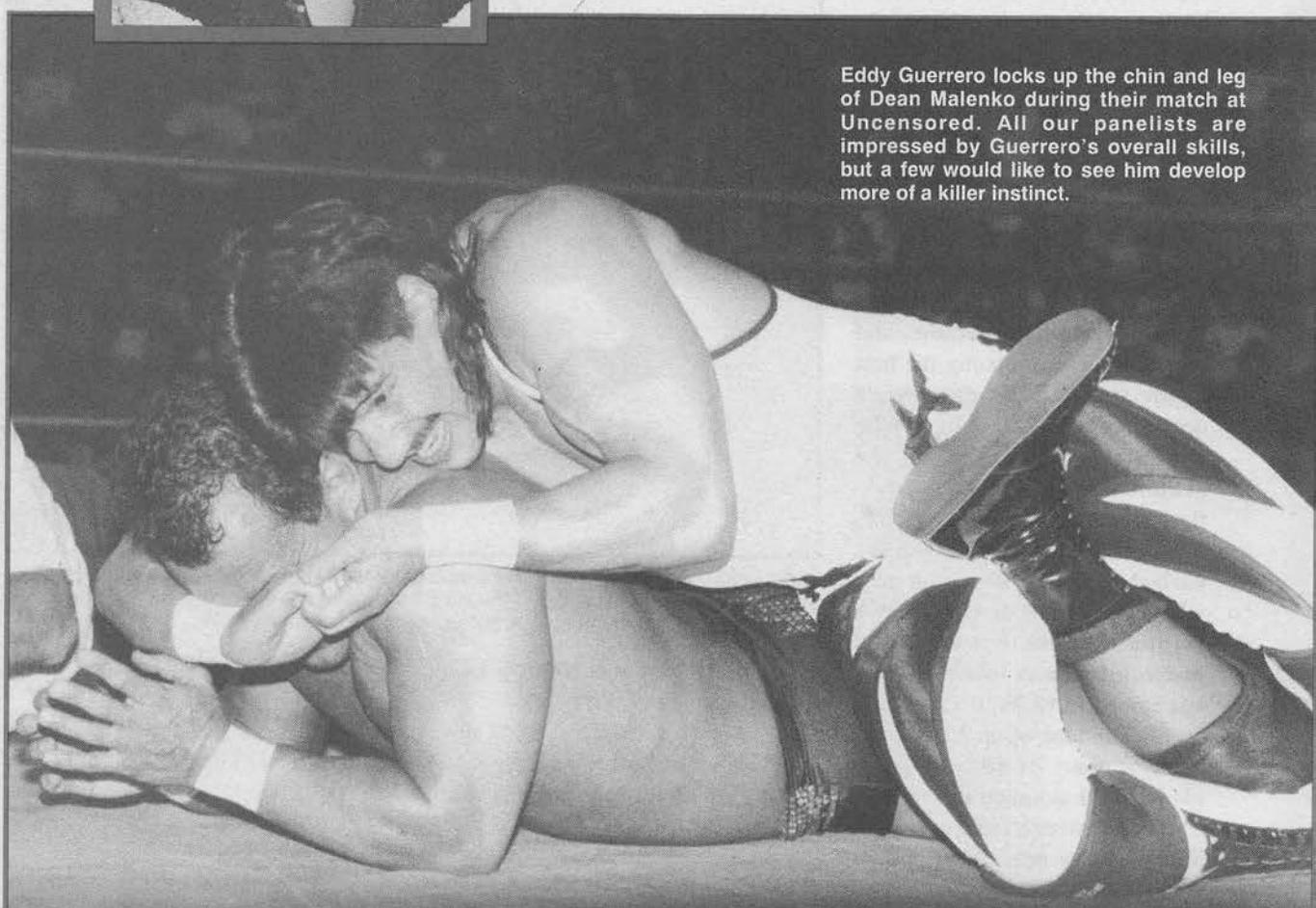
ray

PANEL EXAMINES



EDDY GUERRERO

Eddy Guerrero locks up the chin and leg of Dean Malenko during their match at Uncensored. All our panelists are impressed by Guerrero's overall skills, but a few would like to see him develop more of a killer instinct.





CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"I don't think Eddy Guerrero gets enough credit. He's one of the most complete wrestlers in the world. I'm talking United States, Japan, Mexico, Europe, Africa, anywhere. You want to fly, he'll fly. You want to wrestle on the mat, he'll do it. You want to duke it out, no problem. He can beat you in so many ways, it's kinda scary. The only advice the Captain would give him is to get a little more aggressive early in his matches, but I don't think he wants my advice."

Capt. Lou Albano, "The Guiding Light," has led 13 different tag teams to a record 17 WWF World tag team titles.



KILLER KOWALSKI

"I gotta give Eddy Guerrero his due. He's toughened up in the last year or so. When I first saw the guy show up in WCW, I thought he looked like just another one of them guys who could show you a bunch of fancy moves but didn't know a whole lot about putting it all together. Hey, I was wrong. He'll throw a punch or two if that's what's needed. I still think there's potential there for him to get a little meaner and develop that killer instinct more, but Guerrero's real good."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rule-breakers in the history of the sport, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.



HARLEY RACE

"It's easy to see that Eddy Guerrero comes from a family of wrestlers. He's so careful about every move or hold he uses, and he's so precise, I guess you'd say. You never see him execute a move real sloppy. That shows me he's spent hour after hour sparring and working with all his wrestling relatives over the years, and it's paid off big. Since he's so careful, he hardly ever makes a key mistake, and if you don't make many mistakes, you aren't gonna lose too often."

Harley Race, an eight-time NWA World champion, has also managed top stars like Lex Luger and Big Van Vader.



FABULOUS MOOLAH

"I've told every young lady I've trained for a career in this crazy sport that wrestling is almost as much mental as it is physical. When I was wrestling, I had a lot of opponents beat before we ever even locked up, darlin'. They knew my reputation, and they got scared just by the way I looked at 'em. That's one thing I think Eddy's a little weak at—the psychology. If he can learn some lessons from someone like Ric Flair on that, my, he will be really tough to beat."

Fabulous Moolah, the finest woman wrestler in history, held the World title for 28 years. She now trains wrestlers in Columbia, South Carolina.



OLE ANDERSON

"That Eddy Guerrero ought to take a look at what's going on with Dean Malenko and learn from it. I hear all these people saying Malenko isn't the same wrestler anymore now that he isn't so cool, calm, and collected, but I think that's a bunch of hogwash. No wrestler ever reaches his full potential until he learns how to be mean. I haven't seen that at all from Guerrero since he's been in WCW. Until he changes a little, I see Malenko dominating their feud."

Ole Anderson, a five-time former NWA World tag team champion and founding member of The Four Horsemen, has been retired for several years.



LANCE RUSSELL

"I believe you're going to see a lot of wrestlers like Guerrero come along here in the States in the next 10 years. He uses that Lucha style a bit, but he's also pretty darn good in tight quarters and down on the mat. I know a lot of the big brawlers are still dominating in wrestling, but I think you'll see less of that as time goes by. The thing that impresses me most about Guerrero is his versatility. He'll wrestle in whatever style of match you want to wrestle."

Lance Russell, a wrestling broadcaster since 1954, is now retired. He makes periodic guest appearances on WMC-TV in Memphis.

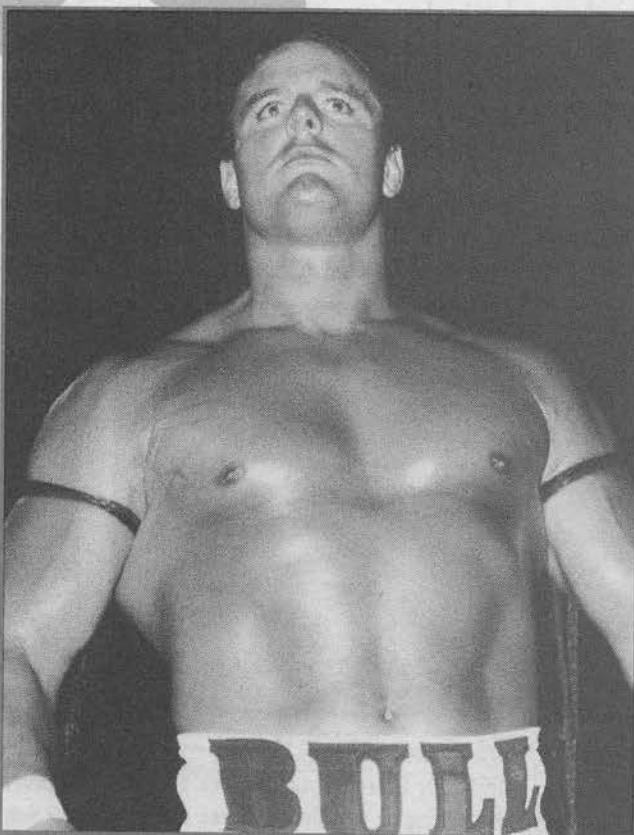
Spotlight on ...

DAVEY BOY SMITH

BACK IN FEBRUARY, "British Bulldog" Davey Boy Smith became just the fifth man in WWF history to win three different titles in the federation, but his accomplishment was a little different than those of the other four (Pedro Morales, Bret Hart, Shawn Michaels, and Kevin "Diesel" Nash): They all won the WWF tag team, Intercontinental, and World heavyweight titles.

Smith has won the tag team, Intercontinental, and European titles. And to win that European title, he had to beat Owen Hart, his brother-in-law and the man with whom he currently holds the tag title. At press time, they were still insisting they were getting along, but a split seems likely. Don't worry about the "Bulldog." He's experienced enough to succeed with or without Owen's help.

A native of Leeds, England, Davey Boy made his pro debut in 1978 at age 15. Three years later, he began feuding with a wrestler known as Dynamite Kid in Canada. They eventually developed respect for each other and formed a team known as The British Bulldogs. Under the guidance of Capt. Lou Albano, they won



the WWF tag team belts from Greg Valentine and Brutus Beefcake in April 1986.

They ultimately lost the belts to The Hart Foundation after Kid suffered a spinal disk injury. After returning to Canada, the Bulldogs won the Stampede International tag title, but when Davey Boy suffered an injury, Kid took on Johnny Smith as his partner. As soon as Davey Boy

returned, the old bad feelings between him and Kid resurfaced, and their feud reignited.

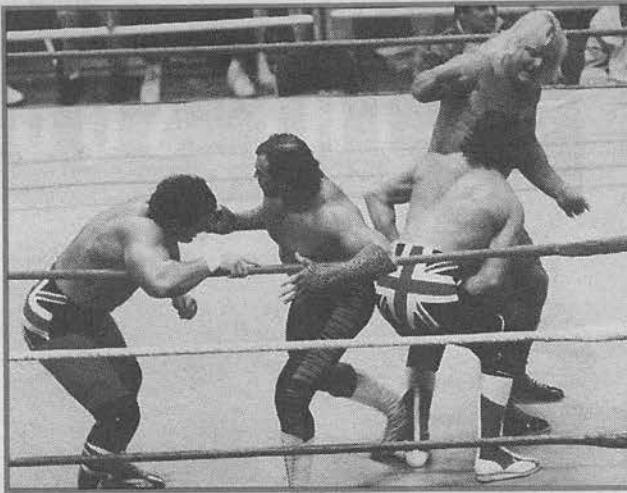
But let's face it: Davey Boy will be remembered most for what he has done in the WWF. He returned there in 1990, and who could forget his Intercontinental title victory over Bret at SummerSlam '92, which took place in front of 80,000 fans at London's Wembley Stadium?

He left the WWF again after losing the belt to Shawn Michaels, then showed up in WCW following a stint on the independent circuit. While there, he feuded with Sid Vicious and Big Van Vader and teamed often with Sting.

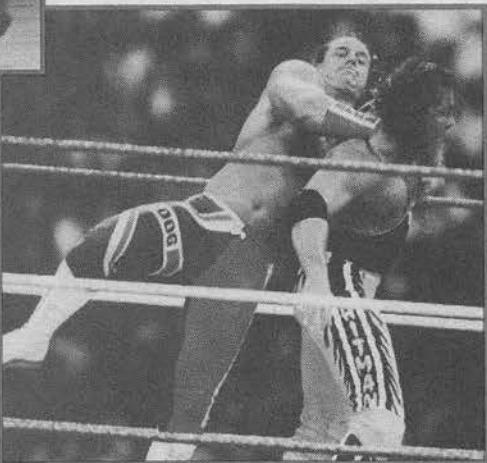
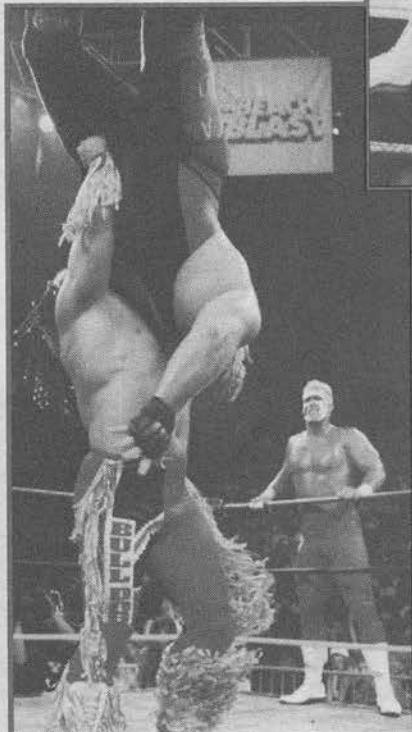
In the summer of '94, he returned to the WWF to help Bret out in his feud with Owen Hart and Jim Neidhart. A year later, he became frustrated when he wasn't getting the title shots he thought he deserved and turned rule-breaker, joining Jim Cornette's stable. Though he received shots at three different WWF champions, he was never able to win that belt. But he is the only man in the WWF currently holding two titles. He is deserving of time in our "Spotlight."



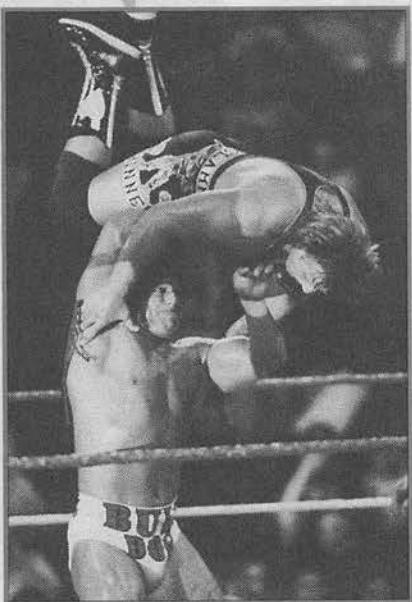
March 1987: The British Bulldogs were one of the WWF's most talented and most popular tag teams of the 1980s; they won their only WWF tag title by besting Brutus Beefcake and Greg Valentine.



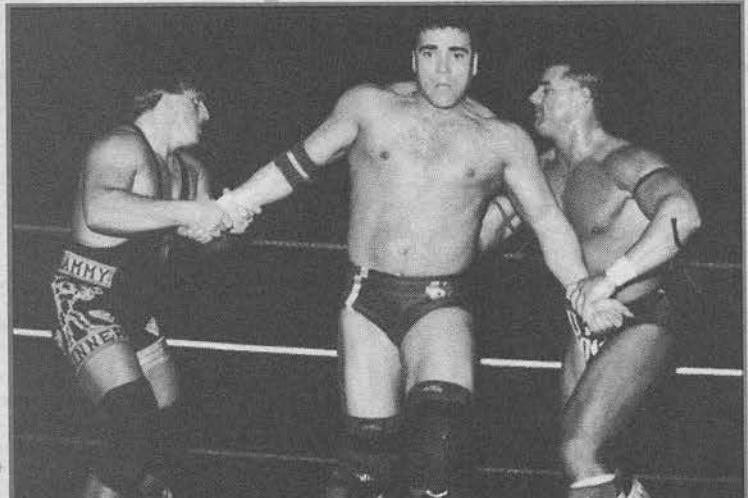
July 1981: Sixteen years ago, Davey Boy wasn't quite as well-developed as he is now. He hadn't yet developed a friendship with Dynamite Kid, the man getting the best of him here.



August 1992: More than 80,000 fans were inside London's Wembley Stadium when the "British Bulldog" beat his brother-in-law Bret Hart for the WWF Intercontinental title. The two men embraced afterward.



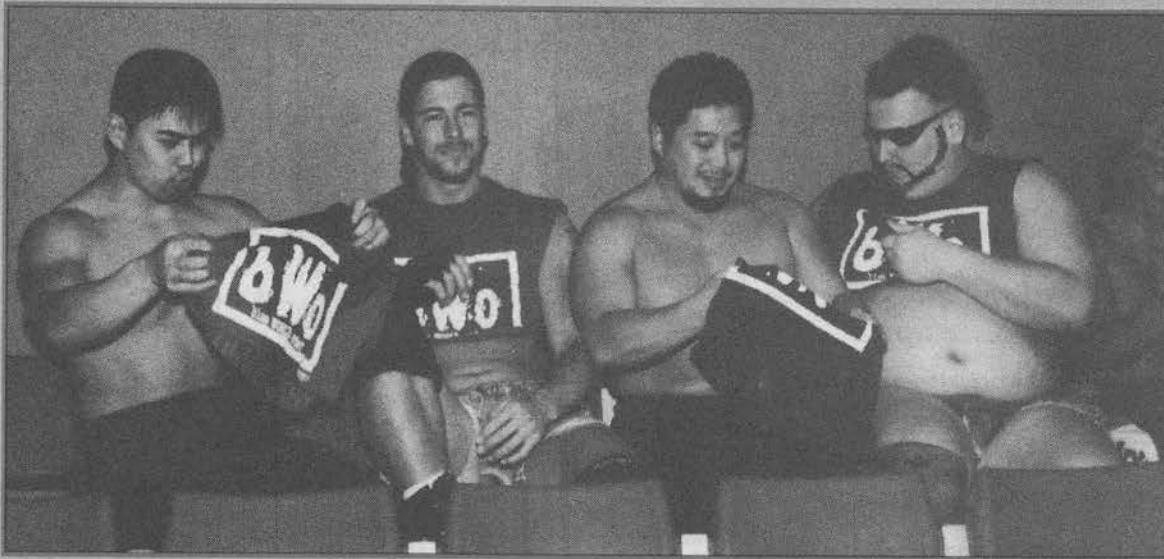
August 1996: Davey Boy and Owen Hart wrestled each other in the WWF's Intercontinental title tournament last fall (just before they won the tag belts) and emerged from the match with a new respect for each other.



July 1993: Davey Boy had a lot of success during his relatively brief stay in WCW. He and Sting beat Big Van Vader and Sid Vicious at Beach Blast '93 when Smith pinned Vader.

February 1997: Sure, Davey Boy and Owen haven't gotten along all that well, but they've still been able to beat Phil Lafon (pictured) and Doug Furnas several times.

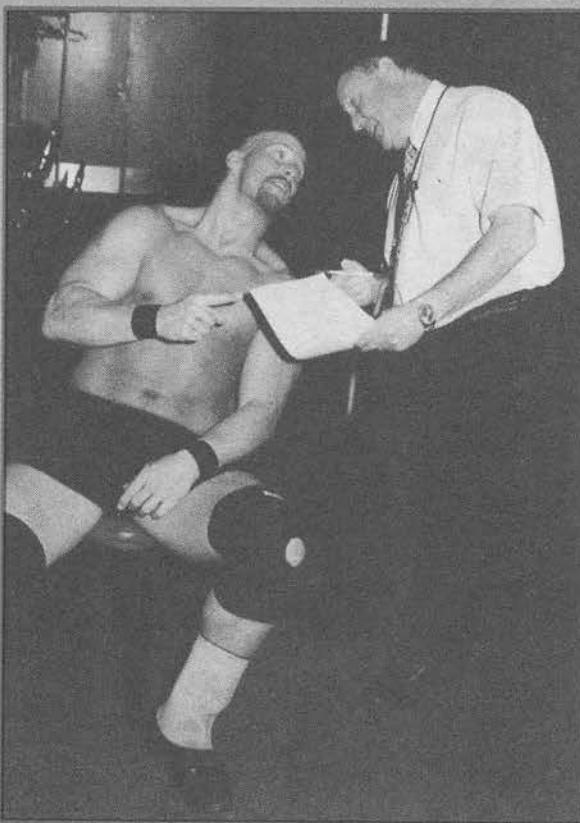
Beyond THE SQUARED CIRCLE



▲ The Blue World Order invades Japan! Yes, it looks like Stevie Richards and The Blue Meanie (a.k.a. "Big Stevie Cool" and "Da Blue Guy") may have gotten Michinoku Pro stars Tak Michinoku and Dick Togo to join their zany group.

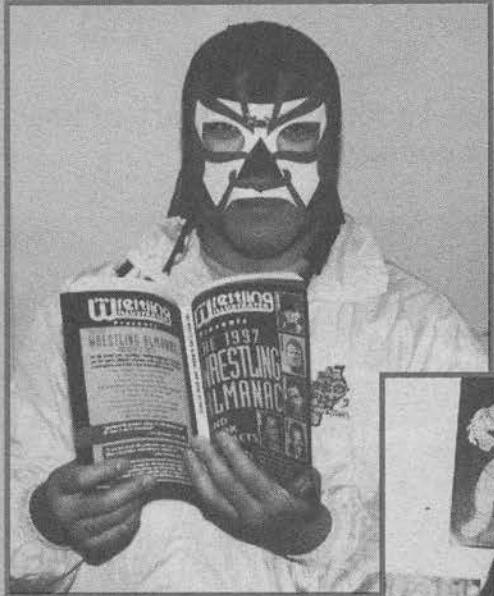


▲ They were briefly tag team partners, then wrestled each other in a few matches, and now they're just pointing fingers at each other. One thing Mankind and Goldust will both always be is strange.

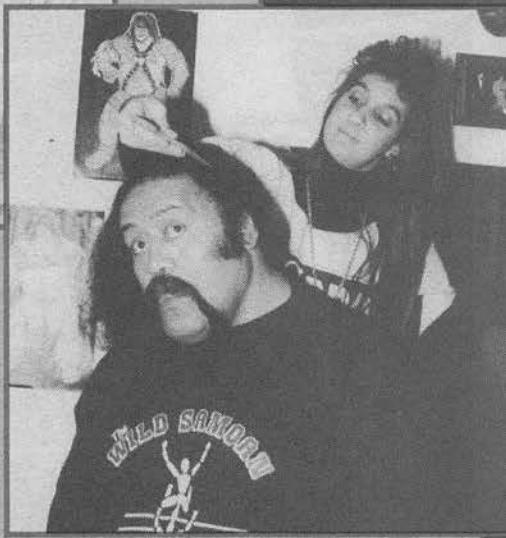


▲ WWF official Dave Hebner was really feeling bold when he questioned Steve Austin on a contract he signed recently. "Stone-Cold" doesn't like it when anyone gives him a hard time.

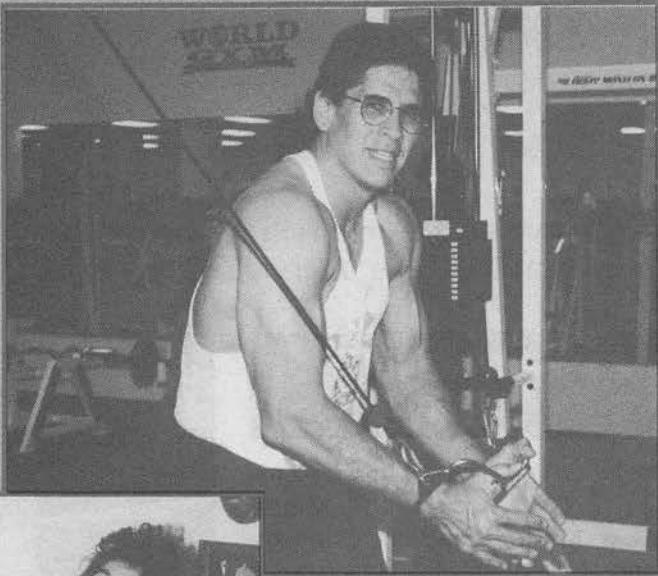
▼ Hey, that 1997 edition of the PWI Almanac really gets around. The Great Sasuke, who does most of his wrestling in Japan, said he learned a lot by reading it.



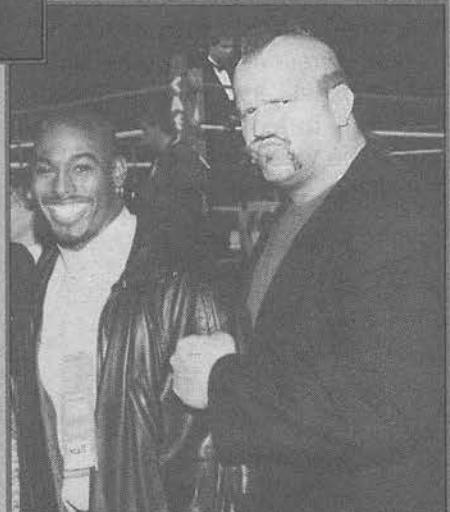
When you're working with ▶ wrestling students all day at your training school, you want to look your best. Samoa Afa always has his wife, Lynn, make sure his hair looks just right.



▲ Funny isn't it—put Ric Flair in a room with eight Hooters girls in a Philadelphia restaurant and his face just seems to light up!



▲ It has been more than 11 years since Tito Santana held the WWF Intercontinental title, but he sure doesn't look like he's past his prime. That's because he spends so much time in the gym.



▲ Wrestling isn't the only sport in which Road Warrior Animal is interested. We spotted him watching a little boxing in Atlantic City with Denver Broncos running back Vaughn Hebron. Animal might make a good offensive lineman.

Scrapbook

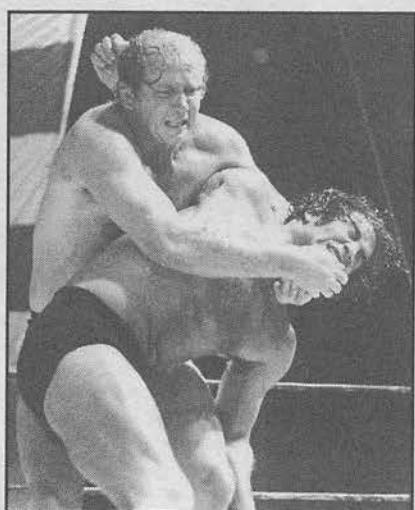
Explore with us the rich history of this great sport as we recall the important news stories at five-year intervals dating back a quarter of a century

MAY/JUNE
1972

DORY FUNK JR. retained his NWA title at the Miami Marine Stadium when he and challenger Jack Brisco were both disqualified for hitting the referee ... Nick Bockwinkel traveled to Los Angeles specifically for the opportunity to wrestle the legendary Killer Kowalski at the Olympic Auditorium. After 12 minutes of extremely violent action, both wrestlers were counted out of the ring ... Amazingly, the Kowalski-Bockwinkel match was not the main event. Former Americas tag team champions—and best friends—Black Gordman and Goliath wrestled each other in a 15-foot steel cage. Though Goliath climbed out of the cage after 20:38, he was too bloody to enjoy his victory ... Two weeks after get-



Capt. Lou Albano was humbled by Chief Jay Strongbow in a 1972 match, but he claimed he only lost because he had been training to wrestle Gorilla Monsoon.



Dory Funk Jr. is known as one of the best scientific wrestlers ever, but his match with Jack Brisco in Miami got a little nasty at the end.

ting a bloody countout decision over The Sheik, Americas champion John Tolos was beaten by "Superstar" Billy Graham in a non-title match. Graham received outside help from Kowalski ... After 40 years, the New York State Athletic Commission lifted its ban on women's wrestling. In the first match in Madison Square Garden, Fabulous Moolah retained her title with a victory over Vicki Williams ... Lou Albano claimed he was in special training, had lost 15 pounds, and was set for an active comeback. His scheduled opponent, Gorilla Monsoon, couldn't

compete and was replaced by Chief Jay Strongbow. Albano lost pitifully, and his excuse was that he had gained 19 pounds for a match against the 401-pound Monsoon ... Prior to Pedro Morales' May 22 Madison Square Garden WWF title defense against Pampero Firpo, his past opponents had averaged 285 pounds. Pedro's strategy against Wild Firpo, who weighed 227 pounds, was to utilize his speed. After taking a menacing beating, Morales came back with three perfect dropkicks to defeat his Argentine challenger ... On the same card,

Chief Jay Strongbow and Sonny King took two straight falls to take the WWF tag team title from Lou Albano's team of King Curtis and Baron Mikel Scicluna ... However, Prof. Toru Tanaka and Mr. Fuji won the belts from Strongbow and King on June 27 in Philadelphia ... Albano, who apparently hadn't taken enough from Strongbow, signed for cage matches against Morales in Boston and Philadelphia. The Captain went back into retirement from active duty after he lost the two matches (and a great deal of blood).

AWA RATINGS: 1—Verne Gagne; 2—Billy Robinson; 3—Ray Stevens; 4—Sailor Art Thomas; 5—Bruiser; 6—Wilbur Snyder; 7—Baron Von Raschke; 8—Red Bastien; 9—Nick Bockwinkel; 10—Crusher.

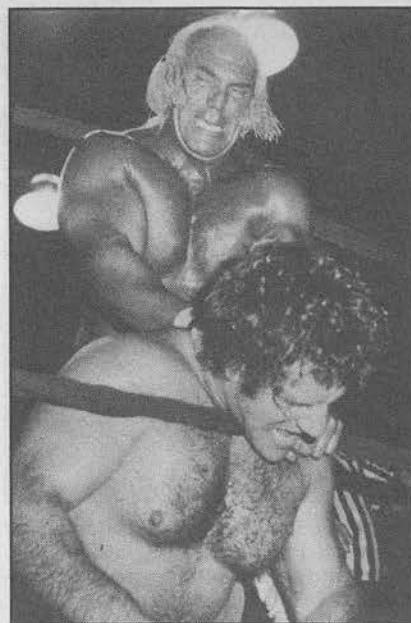
NWA RATINGS: 1—Dory Funk Jr.; 2—Jack Brisco; 3—Bobo Brazil; 4—The Sheik; 5—Mil Mascaras; 6—John Tolos; 7—Killer Kowalski; 8—Tim Woods; 9—Johnny Valentine; 10—Superstar Graham.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Pedro Morales; 2—Bruno Sammartino; 3—Ernie Ladd; 4—Pampero Firpo; 5—King Curtis; 6—Chief Jay Strongbow; 7—Killer Kowalski; 8—Sonny King; 9—Gorilla Monsoon; 10—Rene Goulet.

TAG TEAM RATINGS: 1—The Stomper & Ben Justice; 2—Chief Jay Strongbow & Sonny King; 3—The Kangaroos; 4—Baron Scicluna & King Curtis; 5—Blackjack Lanza & Blackjack Mulligan; 6—Ray Stevens & Nick Bockwinkel; 7—Brute Bernard & Missouri Mauler; 8—Crusher & Red Bastien; 9—Dory Dixon & Earl Maynard; 10—Mad Dog & Butcher Vachon.

MAY/JUNE
1977

FOllowing "SUPERSTAR" Billy Graham's shocking upset of Bruno Sammartino for the WWF World crown, the



A lot of fans were shocked when they saw Superstar Graham beat Bruno Sammartino for the WWF title in 1977, and that Graham initially refused to give Bob Backlund a title shot.

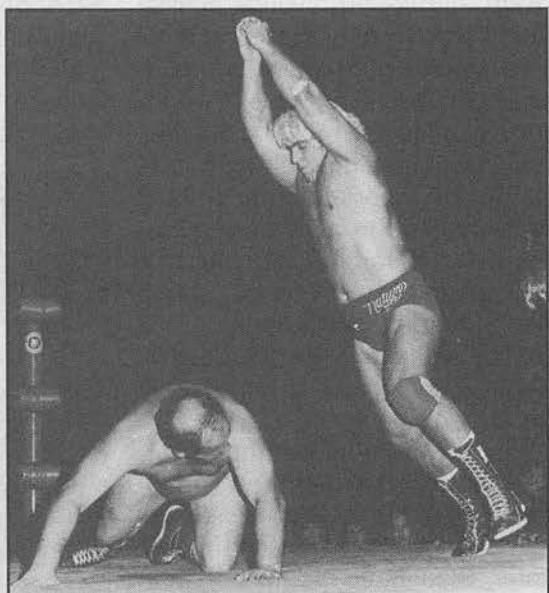
hopes of wrestling fans turned to young Bob Backlund, though Graham refused to grant the former collegiate champion a title match ... Another challenger who was obviously being avoided was Terry Funk, who seemed primed to take the NWA title from Harley Race ... Though Pedro Morales had been a top challenger for more than a year, Nick Bockwinkel would not give him a shot at his AWA title ... Stan Hansen took the North American title from Dick Murdoch on May 2 ... Ernie Ladd and "Cowboy" Bob Ellis, who had been friends, then bitter enemies, patched up their differences and worked as a popular tag team in Florida ... Bruno Sammartino scored a convincing victory over Stan Stasiak in Scranton, Pennsylvania ... Atlanta's Omni was the site of a 13-man battle royal with a Cadillac as the prize. After Dusty

Ric Flair got the best of Gene Anderson here, but he and Greg Valentine really had to work hard to beat Ole and his brother Gene to retain their NWA tag title.

Rhodes, Wahoo McDaniel, The Sheik, Paul Jones, Dick Slater, Mr. Wrestling, Mr. Wrestling II, and others were eliminated, Thunderbolt Patterson was left alone with Lars Anderson. After the referee was knocked out in the midst of the furious action, Patterson smashed a wooden plank across Anderson's head to take a tainted victory ... In Memphis, Harley Race illegally grabbed Rocky Johnson's trunks to reverse a cradle and retain the NWA title ... Ric Flair and Greg Valentine narrowly escaped with their NWA World tag team title after a brutal confrontation with Ole and Gene Anderson ... Seig Stenke and Hans Schroeder failed in four attempts to win the Florida tag team title from Jack and Jerry Brisco ... Bob Armstrong defeated Jerry Lawler for the Southern title.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Nick Bockwinkel; 2—Ray Stevens; 3—Verne Gagne; 4—Crusher; 5—Larry Hamilton; 6—Billy Robinson; 7—Greg Gagne; 8—Pedro Morales; 9—Jim Brunzell; 10—Super Destroyer.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Harley Race; 2—Dusty Rhodes; 3—Terry Funk; 4—Jack Brisco; 5—Paul Jones; 6—Mr. Wrestling II; 7—



Ric Flair got the best of Gene Anderson here, but he and Greg Valentine really had to work hard to beat Ole and his brother Gene to retain their NWA tag title.

The Sheik; 8—Dory Funk Jr.; 9—Ric Flair; 10—Chavo Guerrero.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Superstar Graham; 2—Bruno Sammartino; 3—Ivan Putski; 4—Bob Backlund; 5—Chief Jay Strongbow; 6—Ken Patera; 7—Greg Gagne; 8—Peter Maivia; 9—Larry Zbyszko; 10—George Steele.

TAG TEAM RATINGS: 1—Ric Flair & Greg Valentine; 2—Chief Jay Strongbow & Billy White Wolf; 3—Blackjack Lanza & Bobby Duncum; 4—Ole & Gene Anderson; 5—Mr. Fuji & Prof. Tanaka; 6—Jack & Jerry Brisco; 7—Goliath & Black Gordman; 8—Crusher & Verne Gagne; 9—Johnny & Jimmy Valiant; 10—Mil Mascaras & Jose Lothario.

MAY/JUNE 1982

AFTER 25 YEARS in wrestling, Fritz Von Erich announced his retirement. Von Erich said that he wanted to direct his energies toward the career development of his sons. He also stated that he wasn't happy with the actions of his son, Southern champion David Von Erich, who had begun breaking the rules ... Mad Dog Vachon returned to the AWA and vowed revenge against Jerry Blackwell ... Intercontinental champion Pedro Morales brutalized arch-rival Greg Valentine in a match at Madison Square Garden, effectively ending their long feud ... Roddy Piper and Tommy Rich got involved in a heated verbal battle on *Georgia Championship Wrestling* before George Steele ran in and attacked Piper ... Jack Brisco defeated Piper for the Mid-Atlantic championship on May 10 in Greenville, North Carolina ... Wahoo McDaniel defeated Sgt. Slaughter for the United States championship in Richmond, Virginia, on May 21, but one month later, Slaughter was awarded the belt when McDaniel failed to show for a match in Greenville, South Carolina. McDaniel had been



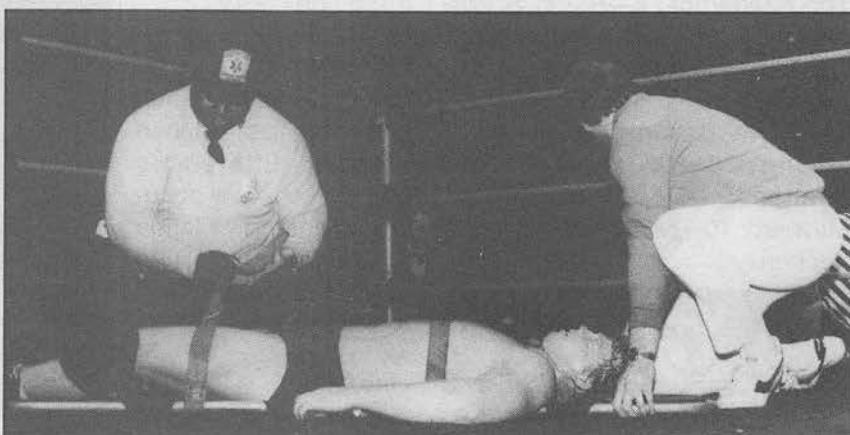
Sgt. Slaughter and Wahoo McDaniel had quite a feud over the U.S. title in 1982. They ended up exchanging it three times between May and August.

injured by Magnificent Muraco and Roddy Piper when he tried to save Jack Brisco ... WWF World champion Bob Backlund had to be carried off on a stretcher after a match against Jimmy Snuka at Madison Square Garden. Backlund, who was weakened by a series of maneuvers off the top rope, was under doctor's care for more than six hours ... Blackjack Mulligan's claim that he was the new WWF champion went unheeded after he defeated Backlund by countout ... Jay and Jules Strongbow won the WWF tag team belts from Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito on June 28 at Madison Square Garden ... AWA official Wally Karbo revoked the license

of manager Bobby Heenan for a month because of his constant interference ... In their long-awaited match in Memphis, Jerry Lawler piledriven Andy Kaufman and put the comedian in the hospital ... Butch Reed startled everybody by pinning NWA World champion Ric Flair on Florida television. However, the belt didn't change hands because the match had been allowed to go past the contracted 30-minute time limit ... Jim Garvin defeated Mr. Wrestling II for the Florida heavyweight title ... Ernie Ladd and Paul Orndorff teamed in the Louisiana area as fan favorites and received a standing ovation when they cleared the ring of The Samoans and Gen. Skandor Akbar ... Kevin Sullivan turned against Buzz Sawyer and became a fan favorite ... Sawyer defeated Tommy Rich in Atlanta for the Georgia National title on May 2, but lost it a month later to Orndorff.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Nick Bockwinkel; 2—Hulk Hogan; 3—Tito Santana; 4—Ken Patera; 5—Baron Von Raschke; 6—Crusher Blackwell; 7—Rick Martel; 8—Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie; 9—Greg Gagne; 10—Jim Brunzell.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Ric Flair; 2—Sgt. Slaughter; 3—Buzz Sawyer; 4—Jim Garvin; 5—Jack Brisco; 6—Bruiser; 7—Roddy Piper; 8—Dusty Rhodes; 9—David Von Erich; 10—Tommy Rich.



WWF World champion Bob Backlund is strapped to a stretcher after suffering serious injuries in a match against Jimmy Snuka at Madison Square Garden. A month later, the two would meet in their famous cage match.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Bob Backlund; 2—Jimmy Snuka; 3—Blackjack Mulligan; 4—Bob Orton; 5—Pedro Morales; 6—Greg Valentine; 7—Adrian Adonis; 8—Chief Jay Strongbow; 9—Tony Atlas; 10—Ivan Putski.

TAG TEAM RATINGS: 1—Mr. Fuji & Mr. Saito; 2—Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell; 3—Super Destroyer & John Studd; 4—Butch Reed & Sweet Brown Sugar; 4—Pvt. Nelson & Pvt. Kernodle; 6—Jay & Jules Strongbow; 7—The Samoans; 8—Stan Hansen & Ole Anderson; 9—Tully Blanchard & Gino Hernandez; 10—Roger Kirby & Jerry Brown.

MAY/JUNE 1987

THE HONKY TONK Man pulled off one of the greatest upsets in wrestling history when he defeated Rick Steamboat to win the WWF Intercontinental title on June 2 in Buffalo, New York ... Boris Zukhov and Soldat Ustinov won the AWA World tag team title from The Midnight Rockers on May 25 in Lake Tahoe, Nevada ... Gino Brito announced he was coming

back to go after Abdullah the Butcher after the Sudanese madman seriously injured Gino Brito Jr. in a Montreal match ... The Road Warriors toured Japan, successfully defending their All-Japan International tag team title ... Bruno Sammartino won a \$50,000, 21-man battle royal in Baltimore ... Mr. T announced he would become a special enforcer referee in the WWF ... The Ultimate Warrior made his WWF debut in Indianapolis, defeating Jerry Estrada ... The Rock 'n' Roll Express regained the NWA World tag team title from Rick Rude and Manny Fernandez on May 26 in Spokane, Washington ... On May 16 in Atlanta, Jim Cornette's Midnight Express won the U.S. tag title, defeating Barry Windham and Ronnie Garvin in a tournament final ... The AWA World title was held up following a May 2 match in San Francisco in which Curt Hennig pinned champion Nick Bockwinkel after allegedly hitting him with a roll of quarters handed to him by Larry Zbyszko. After reviewing a videotape of the bout, AWA officials concluded there was no evidence that Zbyszko or Hennig had acted



Road Warrior Animal has never backed down from anyone, including Japanese star Watima (pictured). The Road Warriors had a nice run as All-Japan Asian tag team champs in the spring of 1987.

illegally, so they awarded Hennig the belt.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Curt Hennig; 2—Greg Gagne; 3—Nick Bockwinkel; 4—Larry Zbyszko; 5—Wahoo McDaniel; 6—Jerry Lawler; 7—Jimmy Snuka; 8—D.J. Peterson; 9—Kevin Kelly; 10—Super Ninja.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Ric Flair; 2—Nikita Koloff; 3—Dusty Rhodes; 4—Lex Luger; 5—Jim Garvin; 6—Tully Blanchard; 7—Barry Windham; 8—Mike Rotundo; 9—Ronnie Garvin; 10—Michael Hayes.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Hulk Hogan; 2—The Honky Tonk Man; 3—Randy Savage; 4—Harley Race; 5—Killer Khan; 6—Hercules Hernandez; 7—Ken Patera; 8—Billy Jack Haynes; 9—One Man Gang; 10—Bam Bam Bigelow.

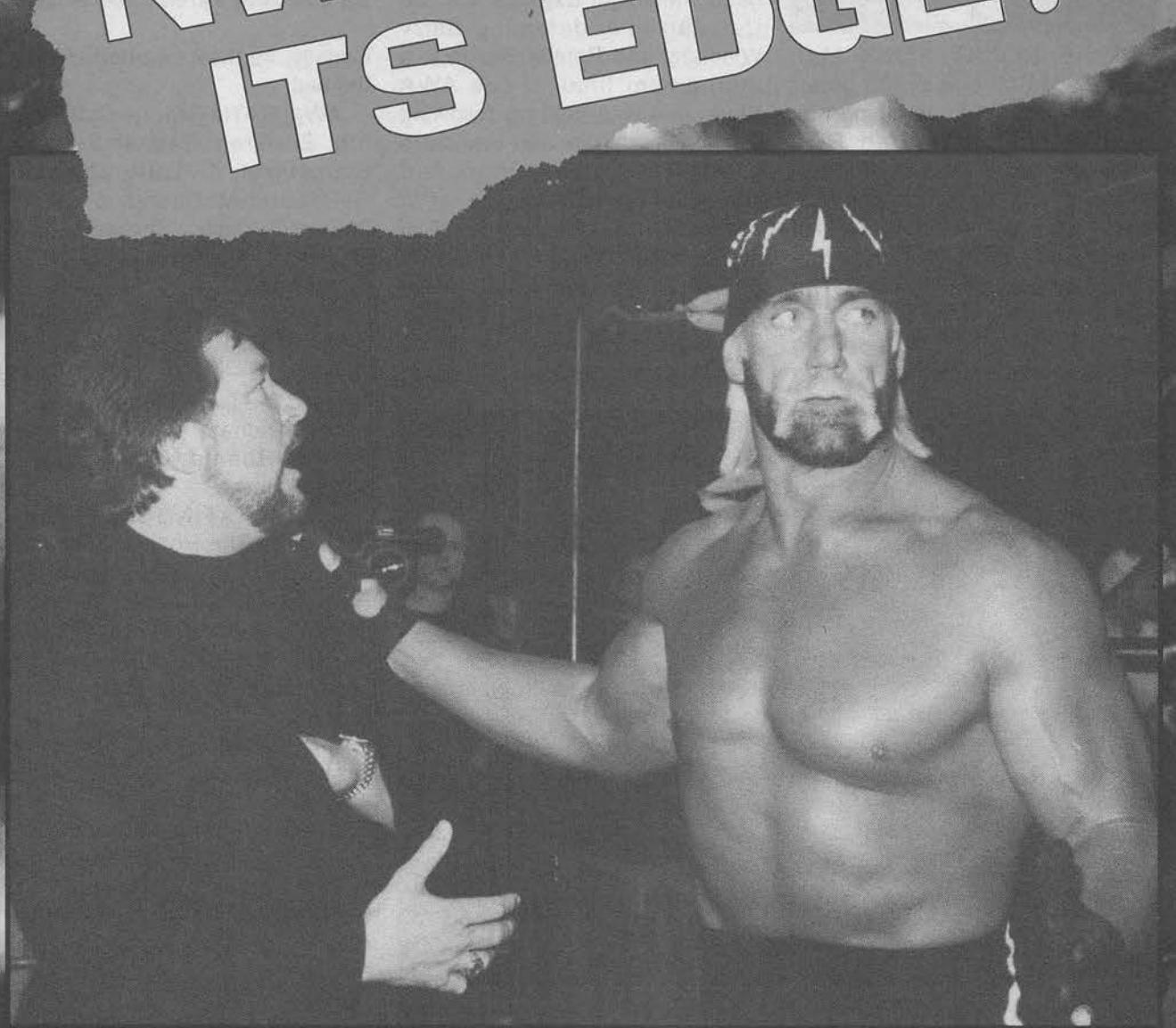
TAG TEAM RATINGS: 1—The Road Warriors; 2—The Hart Foundation; 3—The Rock 'n' Roll Express; 4—The Midnight Express; 5—The British Bulldogs; 6—Tim Horner & Brad Armstrong; 7—The Shepherders; 8—Dusty Rhodes & Nikita Koloff; 9—The Fantastics; 10—Jerry Lawler & Bill Dundee.

(Continued on page 59)

It's still hard for many people to believe that The Honky Tonk Man was actually able to upset Rick Steamboat for the WWF Intercontinental title in June 1987.

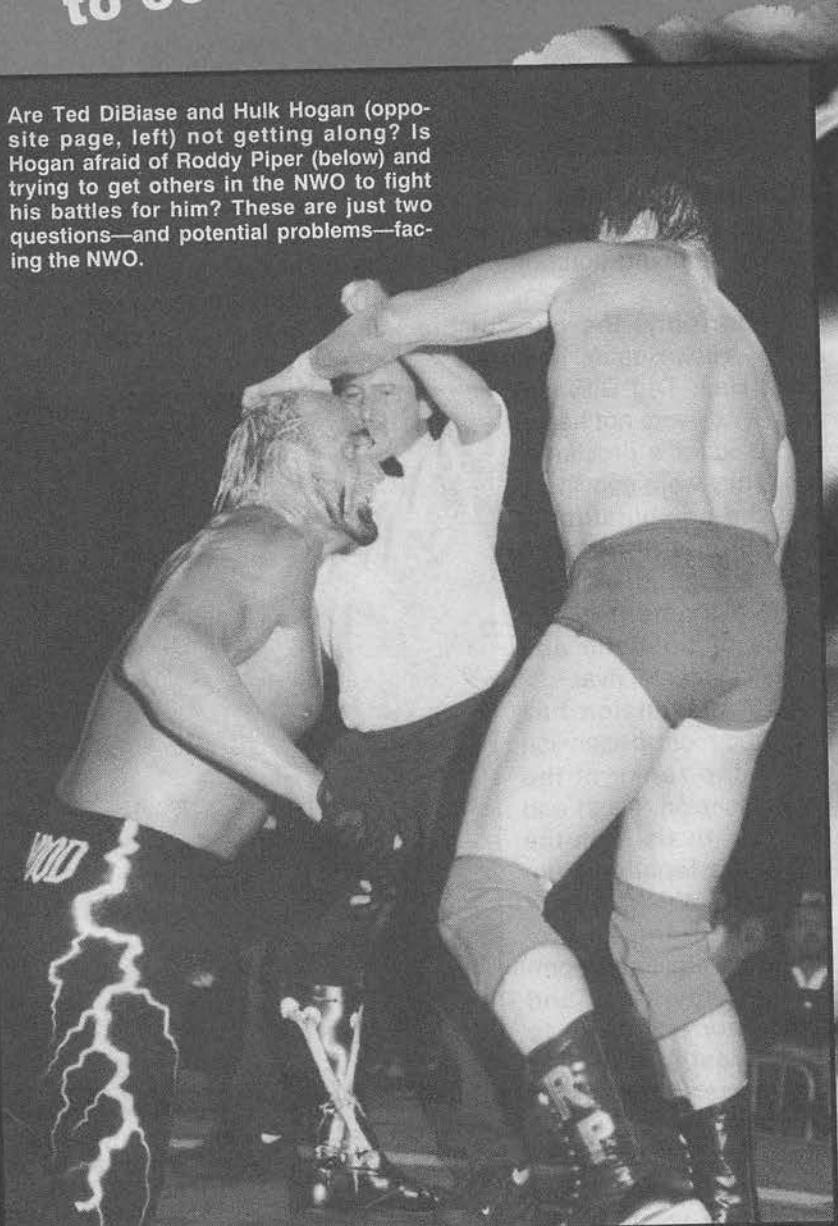
Infighting, Politics, Egos

IS THE NWO LOSING ITS EDGE?



All the members of the NWO will tell you that they plan to rule wrestling for years (maybe decades!) to come. We're telling you the NWO will be lucky if it gets to celebrate its first anniversary

Are Ted DiBiase and Hulk Hogan (opposite page, left) not getting along? Is Hogan afraid of Roddy Piper (below) and trying to get others in the NWO to fight his battles for him? These are just two questions—and potential problems—facing the NWO.



By Steve Anderson

MURPHY'S LAW teaches us that anything that can go wrong will go wrong. And when you're a member of a wrestling supergroup—any wrestling supergroup—you just know there's the potential for quite a bit to go wrong. Just look at the history of The Four Horsemen, or Dungeon of Doom, or Dangerous Alliance for proof of that.

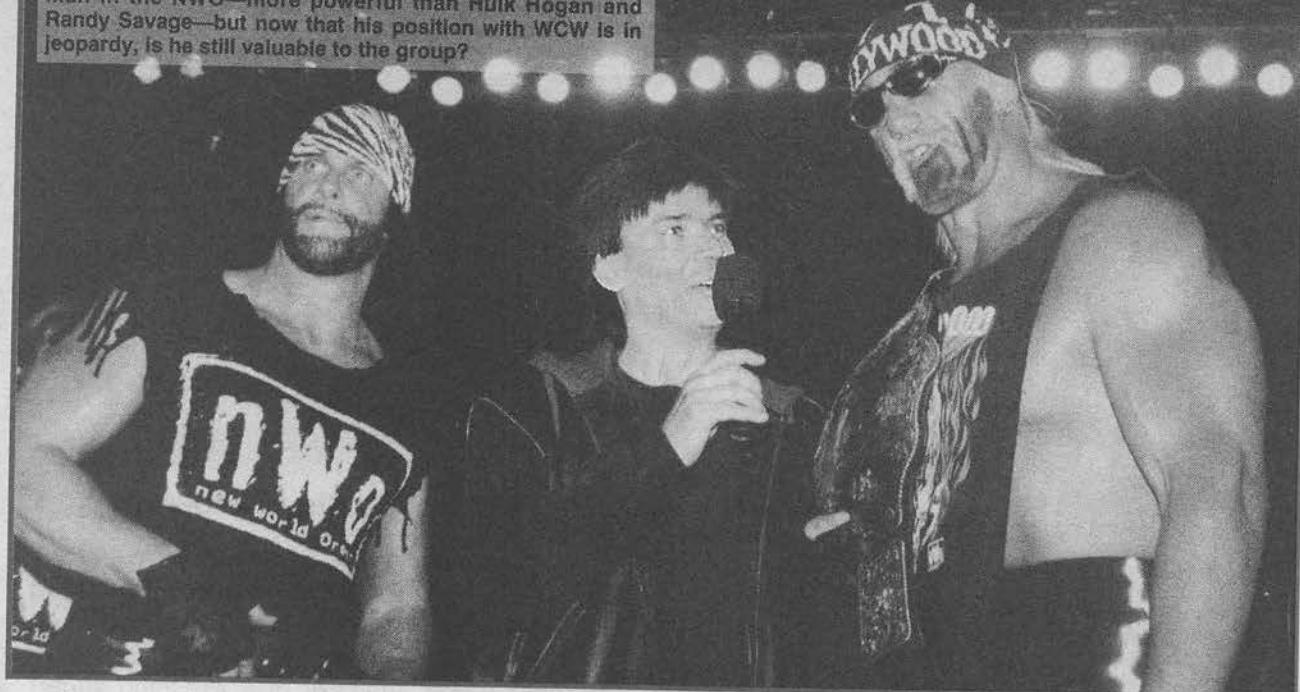
And no matter what Hulk Hogan, Eric Bischoff, Ted DiBiase, and the rest of the gang say, we can add the NWO to that list. Heck, while we're at it, we might as well rename Murphy's Law. Call it *Bischoff's Law*.

It will make a lot of people happy to hear that the NWO is facing some very serious problems now. Apparently, all is not right in that black and white paradise. The power and dominance that the group once enjoyed is in jeopardy. But it's not just because Sting is back on WCW's side ... or because Roddy Piper plans on sticking around for a while ... or because Ric Flair's shoulder is on the mend.

The real problems are coming from within the organization.

For a time, the NWO's domi-

Eric Bischoff still thinks of himself as the most powerful man in the NWO—more powerful than Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage—but now that his position with WCW is in jeopardy, is he still valuable to the group?



nance was frightening. They were winning titles left and right and recruiting whomever they wanted. In an executive decree, Eric Bischoff ordered all WCW wrestlers to convert their WCW contracts into NWO contracts or face the consequences. A few did, but were those the kind of wrestlers the NWO wanted?

Be careful what you wish for, Bischoff, because you just might get it.

Like Uncle Sam on an "I Want You" poster, Bischoff put out the call. The respondents included Marcus Bagwell, Scott Norton, M. Wall Street, and Big Bubba Rogers. Hardly men who have great mainstream name recognition or who can add much to the group. Exclusivity was exchanged for an open-application policy, and the NWO diluted its own talent pool.

Then the lesser lights started to lose matches.

"All of the original guys felt that their talent and track record got them to the NWO," said The Giant, who defected from the NWO back to WCW in December. "After Bischoff opened the door to

anyone, being in the NWO was just a way of defying WCW instead of being someone really great."

Reportedly, the core of the NWO—Hulk Hogan, Kevin Nash, Scott Hall, Ted DiBiase, and Syxx—was not happy with Bischoff's proclamation. They were convinced that the combination of their brains and brawn were enough to keep the NWO prominent in the minds of the fans and WCW, their chief rival.

That dissension has spawned more dissension within the ranks of the upper echelon. Nash and Hall, old rivals from the WWF, are reportedly upset that WCW hasn't given them the kind of top-notch tag team competition they need, and both reportedly want to start wrestling singles more often, but other members of the group would prefer that they concentrate exclusively on tag team wrestling.

"They were never much for tag team wrestling in the past," said Bam Bam Bigelow, who got to know both in the WWF. "This could be a major problem for the NWO."



Kevin Nash might be getting a little sick of wrestling only in tag teams. Same might be true for Scott Hall. The rest of the NWO, however, apparently wants them to keep doing just what they're doing.



Syxx is just like Nash, Hall, and Hogan in that he loves beating people up when they're defenseless. But he wasn't treated like a hero when he beat Dean Malenko for the WCW cruiserweight belt.

Then there's Syxx.

Sources say he was miffed by the reception he got after he won the cruiserweight title from Dean Malenko at SuperBrawl VII. Hogan, Hall, and Nash were all treated like triumphant warriors coming home from long, brutal battles after their title victories. Syxx's win over Malenko was treated as an afterthought.

"I remember Syxx always trying to do stuff to impress the rest of them," said The Giant. "He got real mad when people said he wasn't on the same level with them."

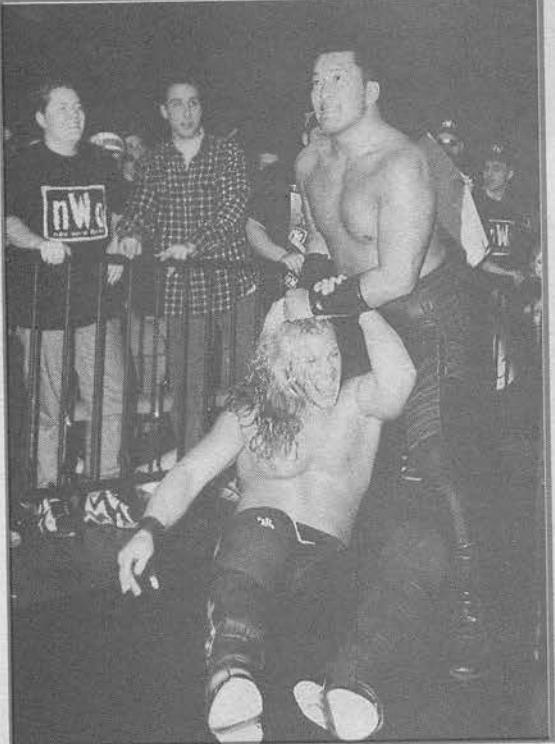
But the most pressing problem has to do with "Hollywood" Hogan himself. His infrequent title

defenses are grating on everyone in the organization. At first, it was tolerated because Hogan was Hogan after all. Now, though, Hogan is drawing his teammates into his own battles more often.

"I know for a fact that no one in the NWO wants any part of Piper," said The Giant. "Hogan has forced everyone in while he stands behind them shielded."

Problems, problems, and more problems.

The NWO seemed to be getting stronger when it signed Randy Savage and NBA badboy Dennis



Masa Chono (manhandling Chris Jericho) has done some recruiting for the NWO in Japan recently. Has this group grown too large, though?

Rodman, but then Sting jumped back to WCW at Uncensored.

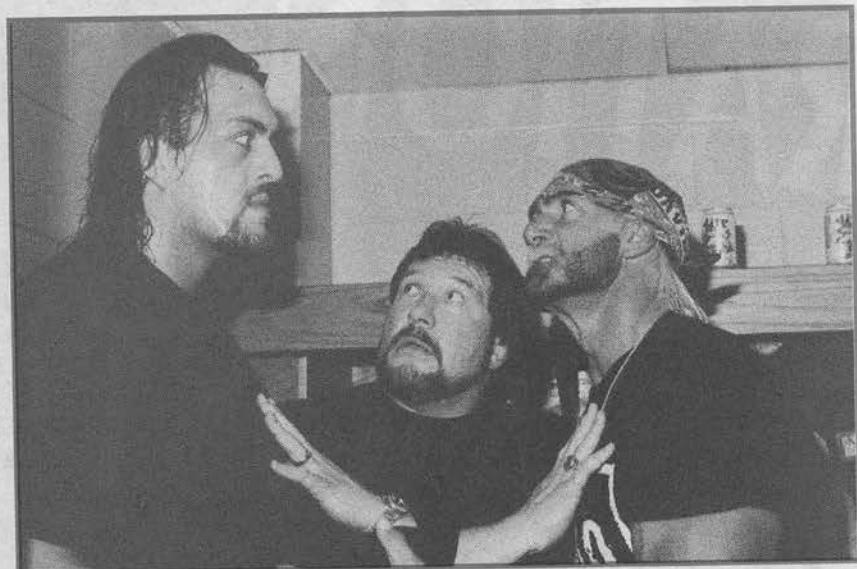
And what happened two weeks before that might have doomed the group forever.

Dr. Harvey Schiller, president of Turner Sports, did more damage to the NWO than any wrestler had to date. He suspended Eric Bischoff from his duties as WCW senior vice president, thus severing the official link that he had to WCW. The exiled executive is now in the uncomfortable role of operating from the outside. And he might not be prepared for it.

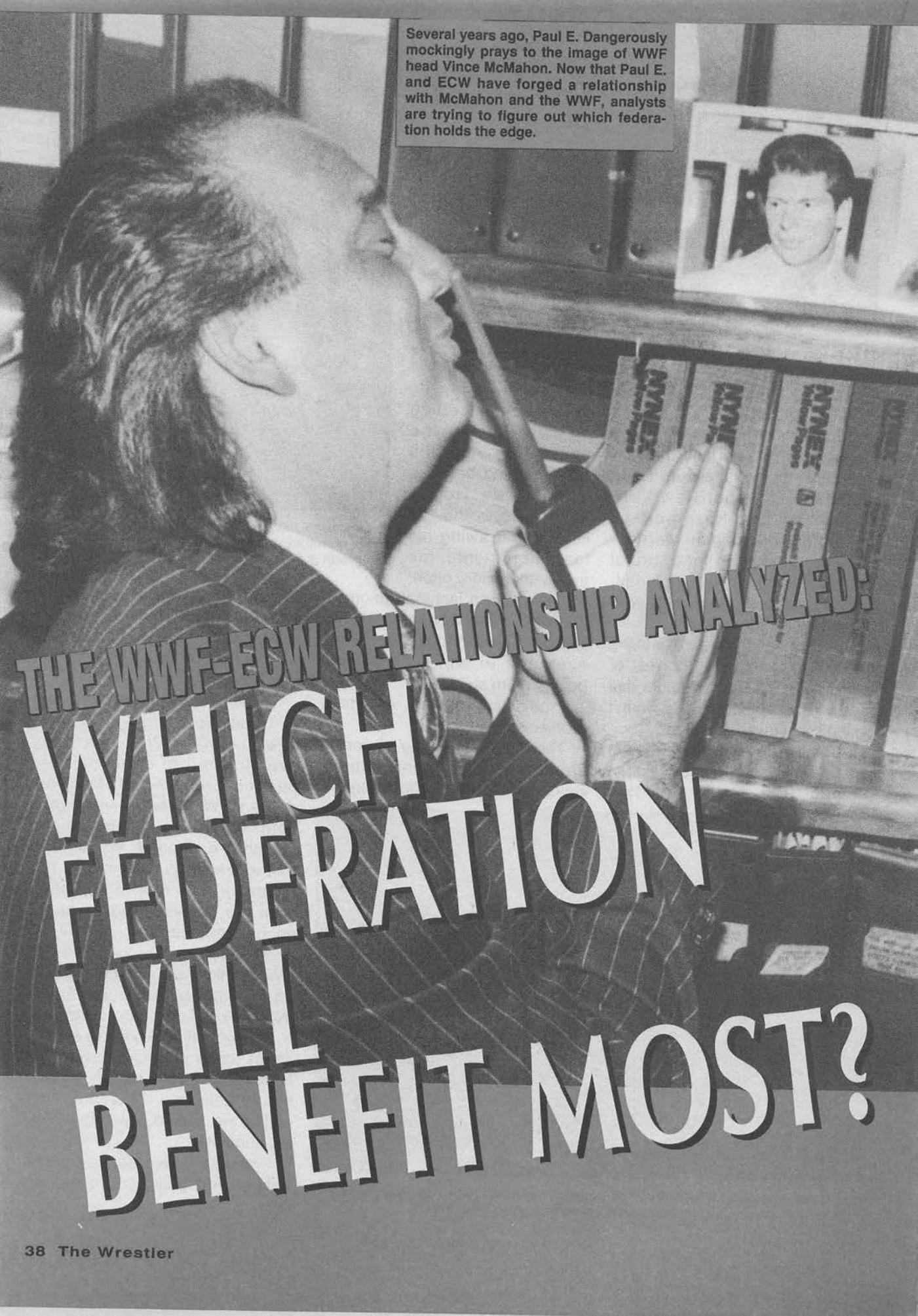
"Bischoff's only value to the NWO, I think, was his ability to hold on to that job," said Lex Luger. "Now he can't do much to hurt us."

"In fact, if everything I hear about these problems inside the NWO is true, and I have good reason to believe it all is true, then maybe we should just stop worrying about it."

"Let's just let them destroy themselves and pick up the pieces later." □



After some heated confrontations with Hogan, The Giant broke away from the NWO in December. He says there were internal problems even back then.



Several years ago, Paul E. Dangerously mockingly prays to the image of WWF head Vince McMahon. Now that Paul E. and ECW have forged a relationship with McMahon and the WWF, analysts are trying to figure out which federation holds the edge.

THE WWF-ECW RELATIONSHIP ANALYZED: WHICH FEDERATION WILL BENEFIT MOST?

The fans love seeing Paul E. Dangerously "debating" Jerry Lawler, and the ECW definitely added some excitement to Monday Night Raw. But is this relationship, whatever it is, good for either side?

By Dave Rosenbaum

NEWS ITEM: ECW FINALLY GOES PAY-PER-VIEW: "The first pay-per-view in the history of Extreme Championship Wrestling will air April 13, the federation announced. The card, which will be dubbed Barely Legal, will emanate from ECW Arena in Philadelphia."

NEWS ITEM: ECW STARS TO WRESTLE ON MONDAY NIGHT RAW: "The WWF announced that several ECW stars will compete on *Monday Night Raw* on February 24. According to WWF officials, the ECW stars were not signed to WWF contracts."

NEWS ITEM: ECW STARS MAY NOT RETURN TO WWF: "Many people thought that ECW competitors such as Stevie Richards, Taz, The Eliminators, The Blue Meanie, Sabu, The Sandman, and Tommy Dreamer



A lot of people enjoyed seeing The Sandman bash D-Von Dudley with a chair (above) and Taz suplex Mikey Whipwreck (right) on *Raw* and thought they added new excitement to the show. Could ECW become the WWF's NWO?

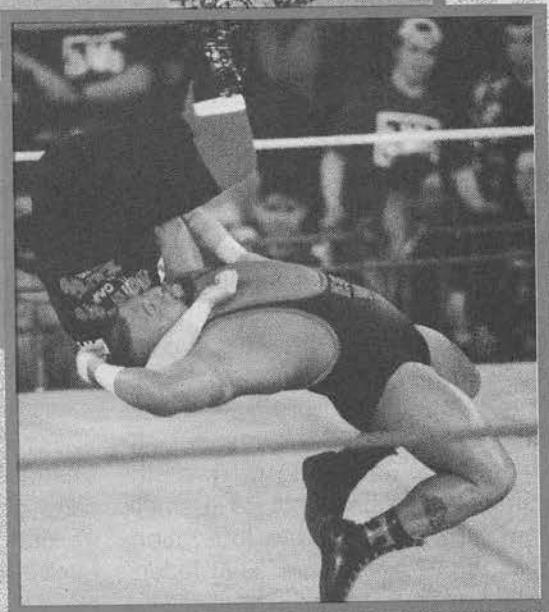
were the stars on the February 24 *Monday Night Raw*, but now it looks like they might not be invited back."

As turning points in wrestling history go, the month leading up to the February 24 edition of *Monday Night Raw* was one for the books, a period to be remembered and analyzed for years to come. If

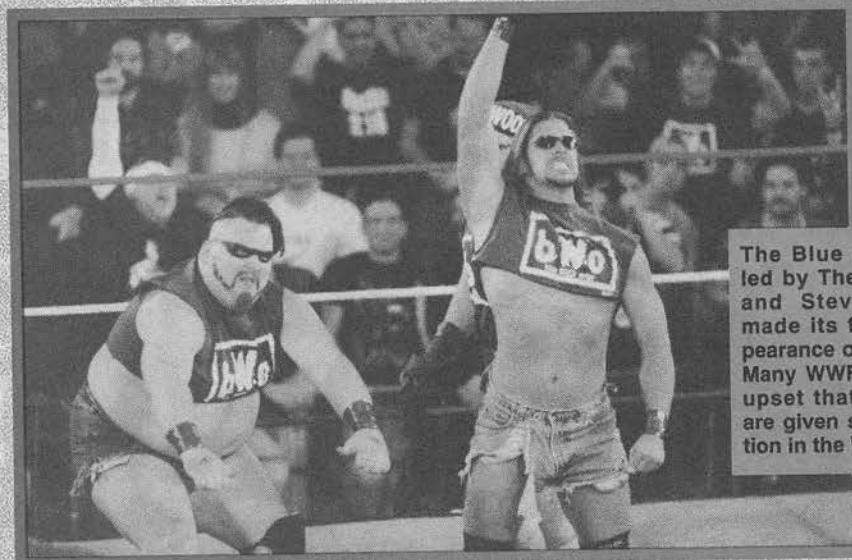
wrestling takes a different look over the next 10 years, we'll look back to February 1997 as the embryonic period.

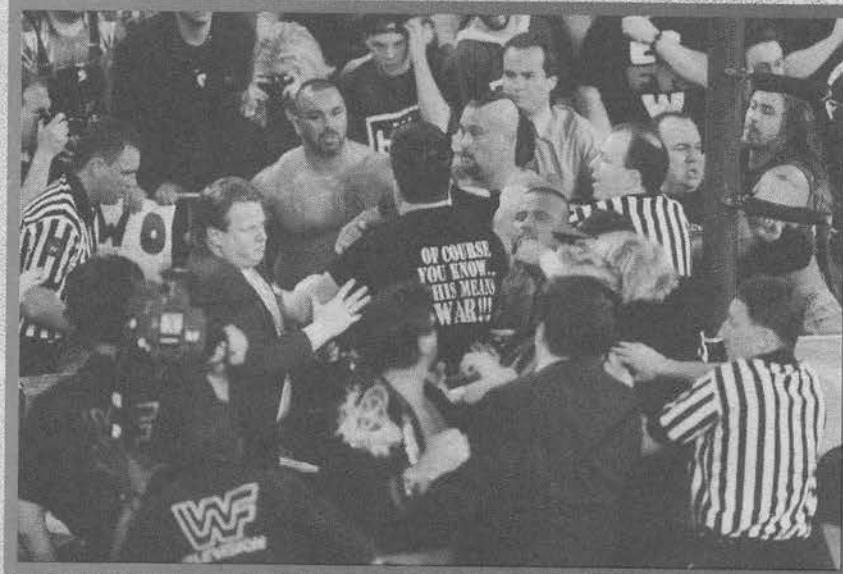
For decades, we had become accustomed to a WWF that had operated independently of any other federation, a WWF that had shunned cooperation and looked down its nose at the smaller federations. Even appearances by USWA wrestlers on WWF cards—and by WWF wrestlers on USWA cards—were mere blips, an attempt by the WWF to build a developmental system.

But this was differ-



The Blue World Order, led by The Blue Meanie and Stevie Richards, made its first WWF appearance on February 24. Many WWF wrestlers are upset that ECW's stars are given so much attention in the WWF.





ent. This was evidence that the WWF was starting to feel the heat from WCW, that it realized it was time for a change. This was Vince McMahon and company saying, "We need to make some major changes. Maybe we can't change from within. Maybe we have to look outside the organization."

So they looked down the road, just about 150 miles away, in fact, from WWF headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut, to a small but growing renegade federation based in Philadelphia. That federation was Extreme Championship Wrestling.

Surprised? Of course you were. For years, ECW was like an annoying mosquito to the WWF, always criticizing its much larger foe for being too mainstream and boring, but never getting a response. And when the response came, did anyone ever expect it to be, "Hop on board. Come with us"?

Nobody expected that, and nobody was surprised,

The battle between The Undertaker and Big Van Vader at the WWF's Final Four pay-per-view certainly got ... well, a little extreme. Maybe the ECW wrestlers would fit right in in today's WWF.

Can't everybody just get along? Not everyone in ECW and the WWF can. Jerry Lawler had to be separated from several ECW wrestlers on *Raw* in February, and there are reports that some WWF executives don't like some of the people running ECW.

"Psycho" Sid. It's McMahon as a well-dressed, hyperactive carnival barker, with fireworks, Goldust, and rap bands. ECW is ECW Arena, a small, dark building in which the fans can get close enough to touch the wrestlers ... and often do. It's falls-count-anywhere, barbed wire, cigarette smokers, beer drinkers, and Singapore canes. It's Sabu, who'll walk through fire, and Shane Douglas, who once threw down the championship belt he had just won.

The two federations are so different, and yet here they are, trying to work together. For the common good ... or for the eventual fall of both.

There is so much to gain, yet so much to lose. Perhaps McMahon realized what the New World Order did for WCW, injecting it with weekly excitement, controversy, and winning Monday night ratings. He might have thought, *ECW can be our NWO*, and maybe he's

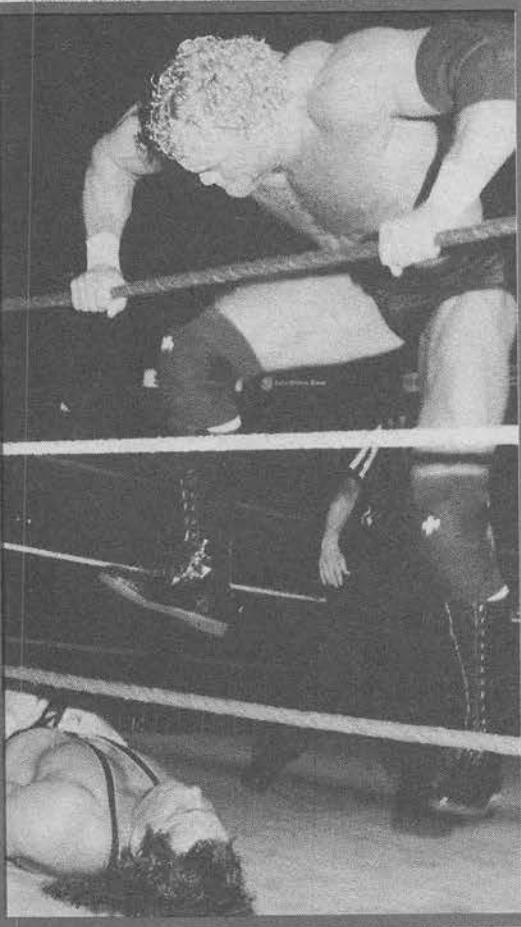
either, when the start was so rocky that WWF officials reconsidered their decision to invite ECW wrestlers onto future *Raws*.

"If we're too extreme for them, it's their loss," said Tommy Dreamer.

Is it really? Let's take a closer look.

ECW is nothing like the WWF. The WWF is glitz, glamour, and show biz. It was Hulk Hogan, now it's Bret Hart, Steve Austin, Shawn Michaels, The Undertaker, and





Some experts say the WWF has a very weak talent roster right now, though "Psycho" Sid and Bret Hart would probably disagree. If the WWF and ECW were to get into an all-out war, think about how bad the loser would look.

And what does it say about ECW, the so-called renegade federation, when it climbs into bed with the WWF? Doesn't that mean they're not renegades anymore? There's no telling how ECW's fanatical fans will react to this obvious sellout.

"I really don't think ECW is going to help WWF as much as it will help ECW," said suspended WCW Senior Vice President Eric Bischoff during a Prodigy cyberspace chat. "The ECW product is a very unique product and it appeals to a very small segment of the viewing audience. The product of today is not pro-

duced for mass consumption. In order for it to exist on national television, it will have to be modified to the point that it doesn't have the unique qualities it currently has. If it's watered down to be suitable for mass consumption, then the talent currently in ECW will not benefit the WWF."

The WWF loves the idea of having fresh talent, such as Raven, The

Dangerously addresses the *Raw* crowd at the Manhattan Center. Without a doubt, it was a pro-ECW audience.

right ... in more ways than one. Because just as the NWO threatens to swallow up WCW, ECW could ruin the WWF.

Picture this: The USA Network decides that ECW's style of wrestling is far more exciting and appealing to its viewers. The presence of ECW wrestlers improves *Monday Night Raw*'s ratings, so when their contract with the WWF runs out, USA Network executives take the next logical step: They kick the WWF out the door and turn *WWF Monday Night Raw* into *ECW Monday Night Raw*.

There's just so much that could go wrong for the WWF. Many WWF higher-ups haven't forgotten the way certain ECW wrestlers and officials belittled the WWF (see Q & A with Jerry Lawler, page 20). Are they so willing to kiss and make up, or will this bitterness destroy any attempt at cooperation?

Sandman, The Pit Bulls, Dreamer, Brian Lee, and others on *Raw*. Should a long-term agreement between the organizations be worked out, the WWF could have access to ECW's entire talent roster.

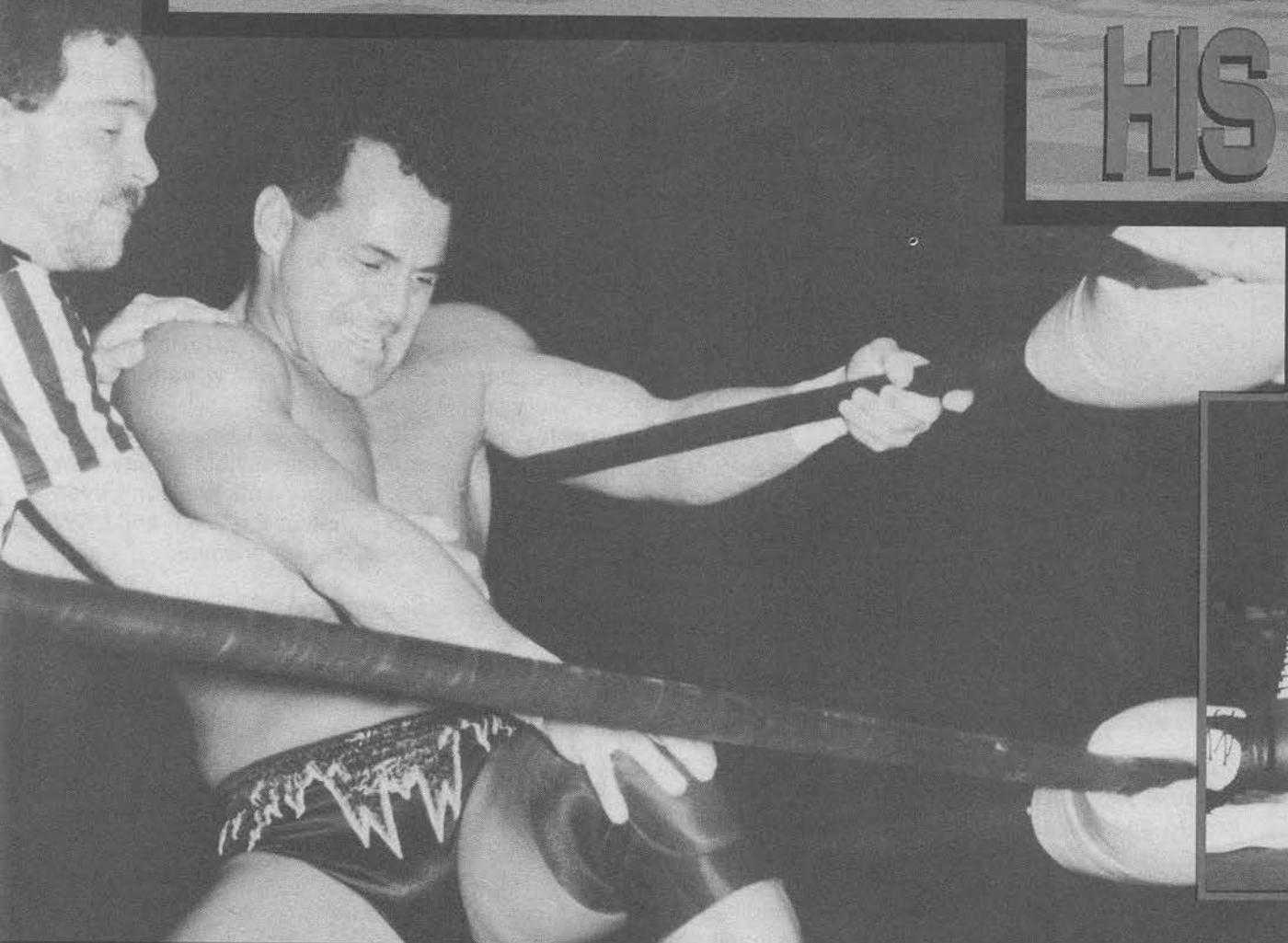
And ECW's decision to work with the WWF, like its first attempt at pay-per-view, represents progress, a move toward getting bigger and seeing how much demand there is for a renegade federation.

But what if ECW loses this war? What if the WWF/ECW agreement turns into a corporate takeover, with the WWF offering larger salaries to ECW wrestlers than ECW can afford?

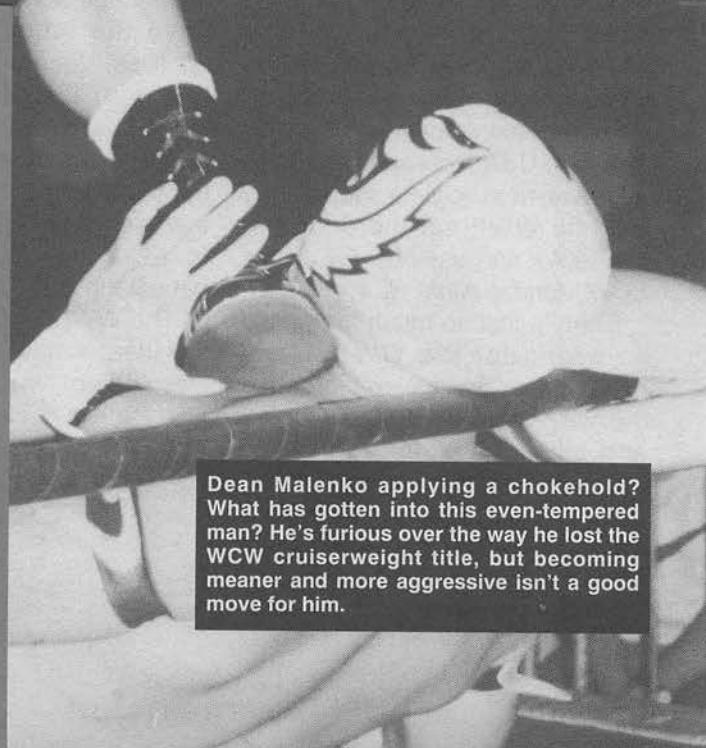
So much to lose, so much to gain. It's impossible to say how this will play out. We don't even know whether the WWF and ECW are allies ... or enemies. □



CAN DEAN MALENKO HIS

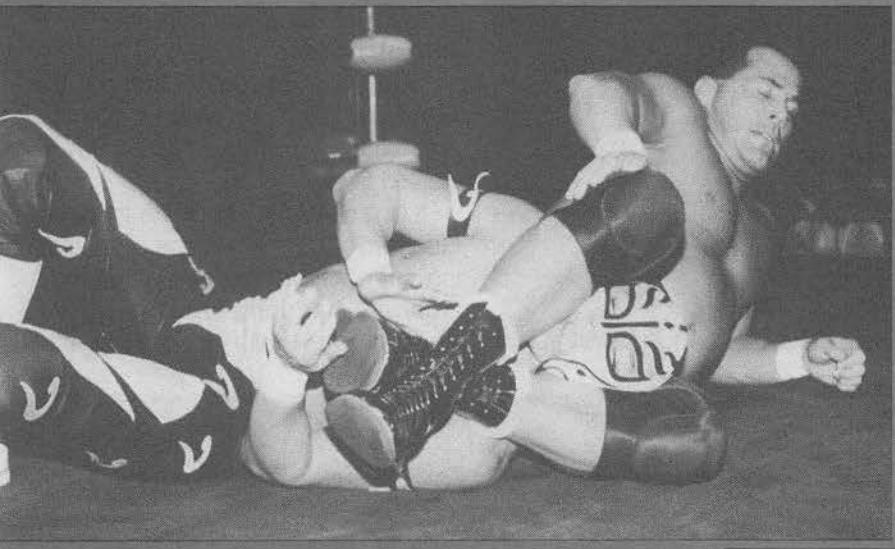


He is a superb mat wrestler, a tactician who has an answer for any move an opponent throws at him. But now Dean Malenko must come up with a counter for his own foolishness

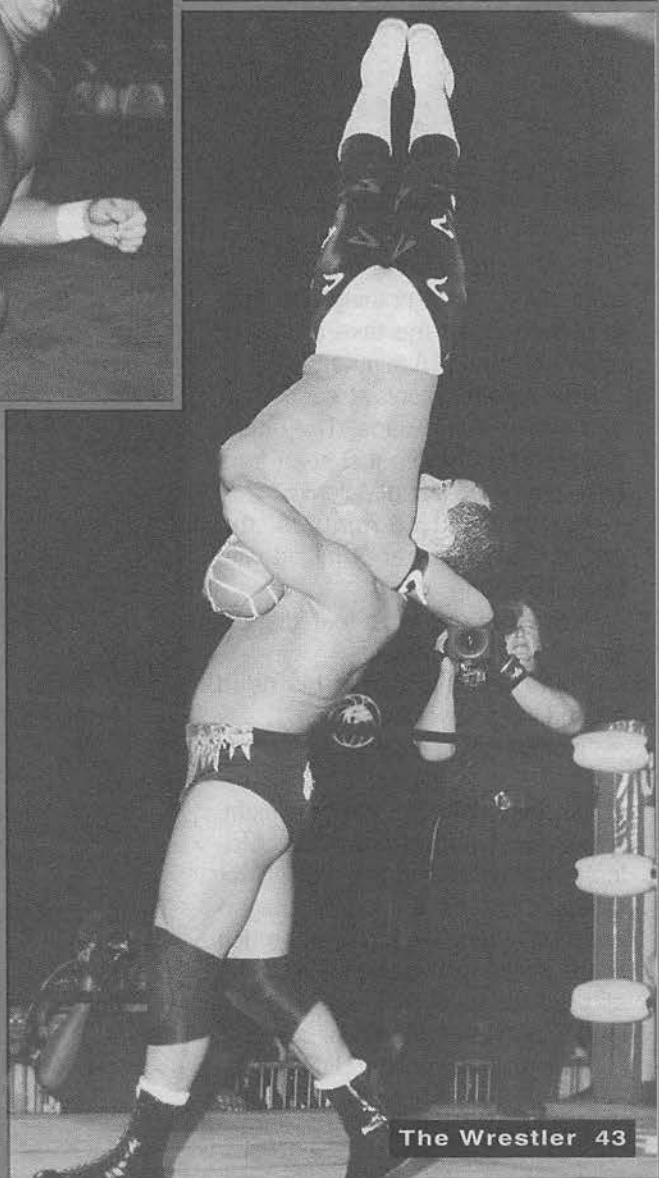


Dean Malenko applying a chokehold? What has gotten into this even-tempered man? He's furious over the way he lost the WCW cruiserweight title, but becoming meaner and more aggressive isn't a good move for him.

CONQUER TOUGHEST FOE ...DEAN MALENKO?



This is how Malenko needs to go about winning a match: He has to wear down his foes very methodically on the mat (left), then maybe use a few suplexes to set them up for the kill (below).



By Dave Rosenbaum

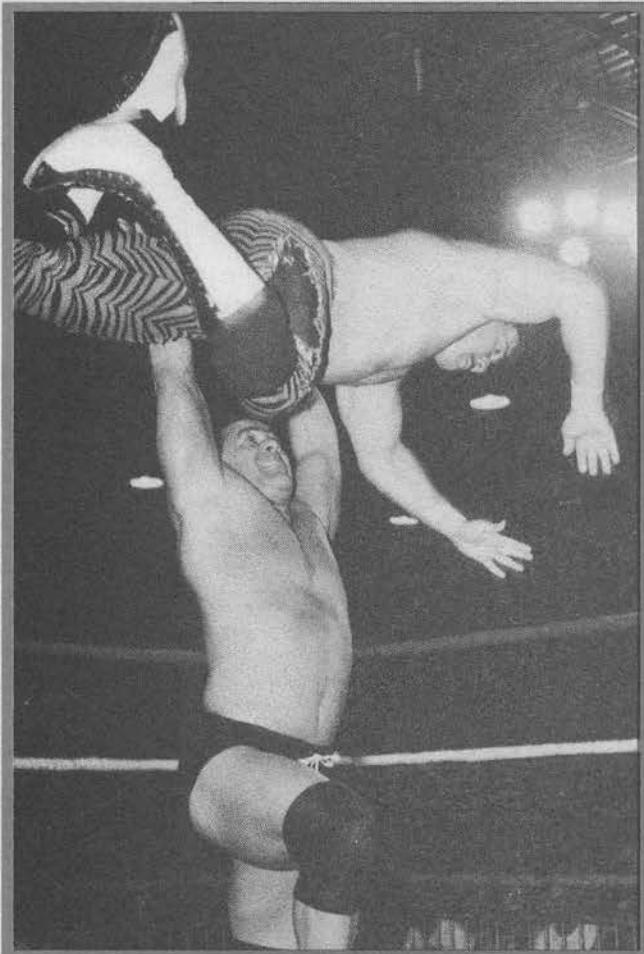
CRASH! FROM OUTSIDE the door to one of the locker rooms at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, reporters covering SuperBrawl VII heard a noise that piqued their curiosity. *Slam!* Now it sounds as if the man inside is throwing chairs against the wall and kicking in a locker. Suddenly, the door opens and three wrestlers walk out.

"You guys sure you want to talk to him?" asks Hugh Morris.

"Never seen him like that," says Harlem Heat's Stevie Ray.

"What got into him?" says Craig Pittman, walking away in a hurry without closing the door.

Now the reporters can see what's going on: Dean Malenko is holding a medicine ball and deciding whether to hurl it through a large window. Then he turns, sees the reporters standing in the doorway, and gently places the ball on the ground.



Malenko has done well in his long rivalry with Eddy Guerrero up to this point. That's because he has always tried to outwrestle him, not beat him up.

gon offered Malenko a handshake. Malenko answered with a clothesline. So much for good sportsmanship. Later in the match, Malenko dropped Ultimo Dragon to the mat and began choking him. When the referee ordered him to stop, Malenko tightened his grip. Eventually, he was disqualified.

"Who cares?" was Malenko's only comment to the media.

According to insiders, a few days after SuperBrawl, Eddy Guerrero tried to apologize to Malenko, his longtime rival, for inadvertently costing him the match against Syxx. Guerrero had tried to prevent Syxx from hitting Malenko with the cruiserweight belt, but ended up getting caught in a tug-o'-war that cost Malenko the match.

"Eddy extended his hand in friendship," said one witness. "Dean just said something to him and walked away."

It isn't difficult for Malenko to view Guerrero's good intentions as nothing more than a ruse. Malenko and Guerrero had long feuds in ECW and Japan that, according to

"You guys waiting for me?" he asks calmly, as if nothing had happened. "Just let me take a shower and I'll be out in 15 minutes."

The reporters look at each other and shake their heads. They can't believe what they've just seen from mild-mannered Dean Malenko.

For the next 15 minutes, the sound of the shower is mixed with Malenko yelling.

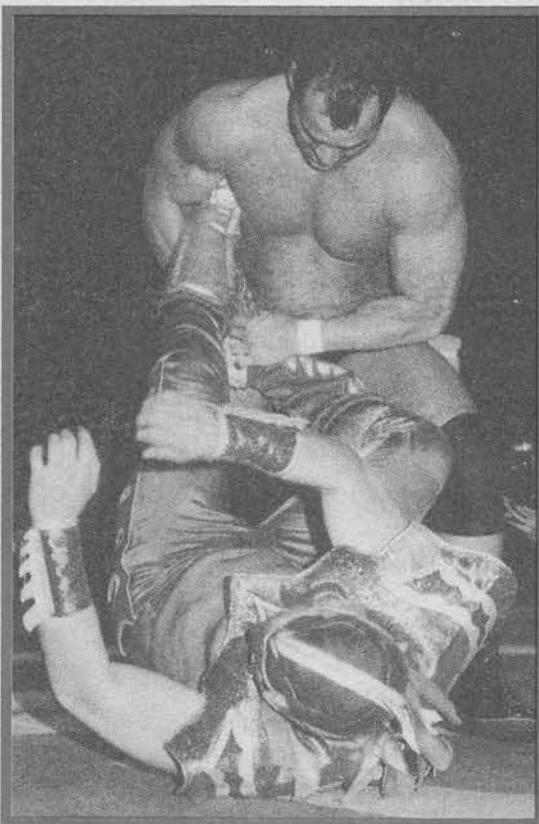
"I can't believe what that idiot did to me!" Malenko shouts.

Then Malenko peaks his head around the shower wall.

"Not tonight," he says.

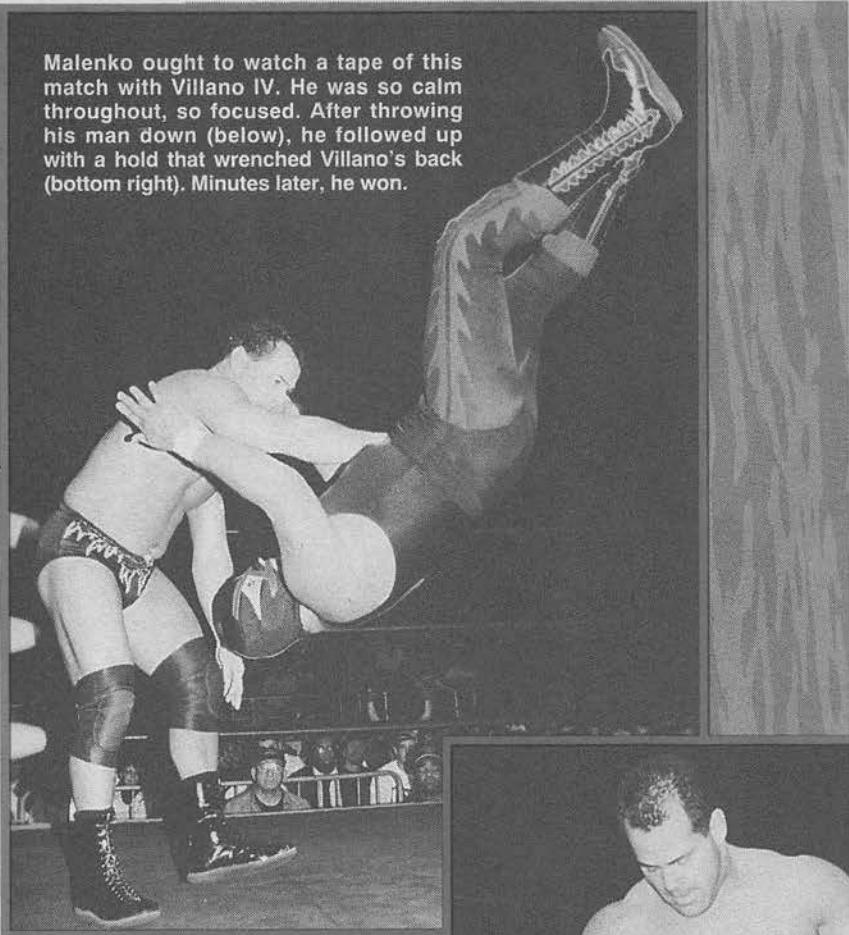
Not that night, not the next night, either, as it turned out. Dean Malenko wasn't talking the night Syxx defeated him for the WCW cruiserweight title, and he didn't say much in the ensuing weeks. Instead, he allowed his actions to speak much louder than any words ever could.

Prior to one match, Ultimo Dra-



"The Man Of 1,000 Holds" has shown a pretty good portion of his scientific repertoire in matches with Ultimo Dragon. It used to be that you'd never see Malenko throw a punch or use a chokehold.

Malenko ought to watch a tape of this match with Villano IV. He was so calm throughout, so focused. After throwing his man down (below), he followed up with a hold that wrenched Villano's back (bottom right). Minutes later, he won.

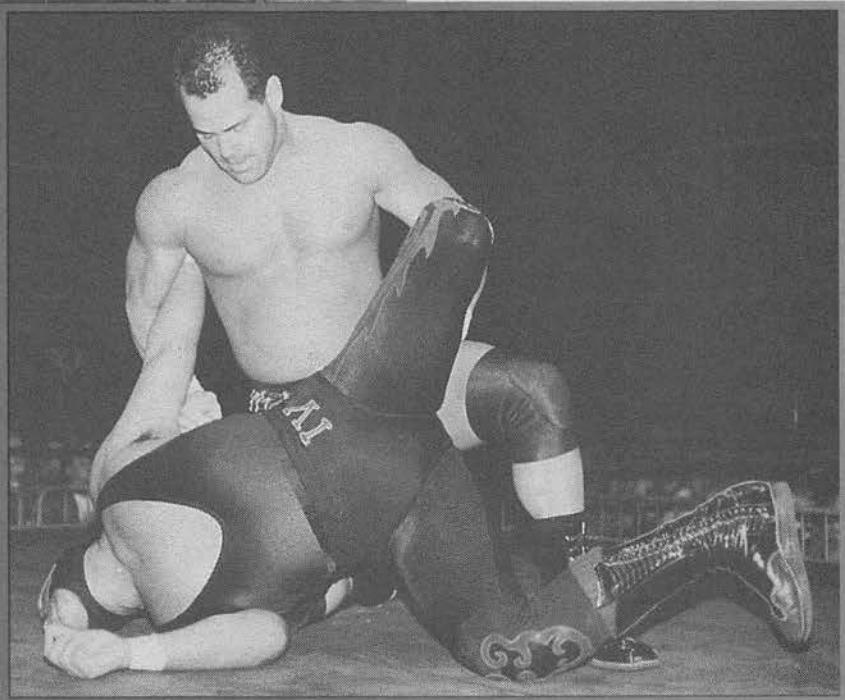


Guerrero, "ended up with me respecting him more than any other wrestler on the planet. He's a great one."

But the qualities that made Malenko so good—patience, intelligence, a thorough knowledge of his opponents, and a calm, serious mat style—have been abandoned since he lost the belt to Syxx. It's as if Malenko suddenly decided, *If that's what I get for wrestling that way, maybe I should find a different way*. Now it seems as if he doesn't care about winning or losing; he only cares about hurting people.

"He's completely out of control," Guerrero said. "I've never seen him wrestle this way. Even when he goes all-out and starts stringing moves together, you can tell that everything's been thought out. I don't think he really cares anymore. All he does is get into the ring and go after people. I'll tell you one thing: That style can never work for Dean."

Patience was always Malenko's



finest virtue. It had to be. After making his pro debut in 1979, Malenko spent most of his career wrestling in obscurity, looking for a big break and never getting one in North America until the mid-1990s, when WCW offered him a contract. Without patience, Malenko might have retired after 10 years and found another line of work, but he kept working hard to realize his dream. Suddenly, he's on the verge

of throwing it all away, and he has nobody to blame but himself.

"The most difficult part of being a scientific wrestler is controlling yourself," said wrestling legend Lou Thesz. "Sometimes you're tempted to take the easy way out, but that never works, especially if you don't have the power to win a match with your strength. You become your own toughest enemy because one side of your mind is saying, 'Calm down,' while the other side is saying, 'Kill!' I know. I've had that happen to me. Believe me, I lost a few matches here and there because I wrestled like somebody other than Lou Thesz."

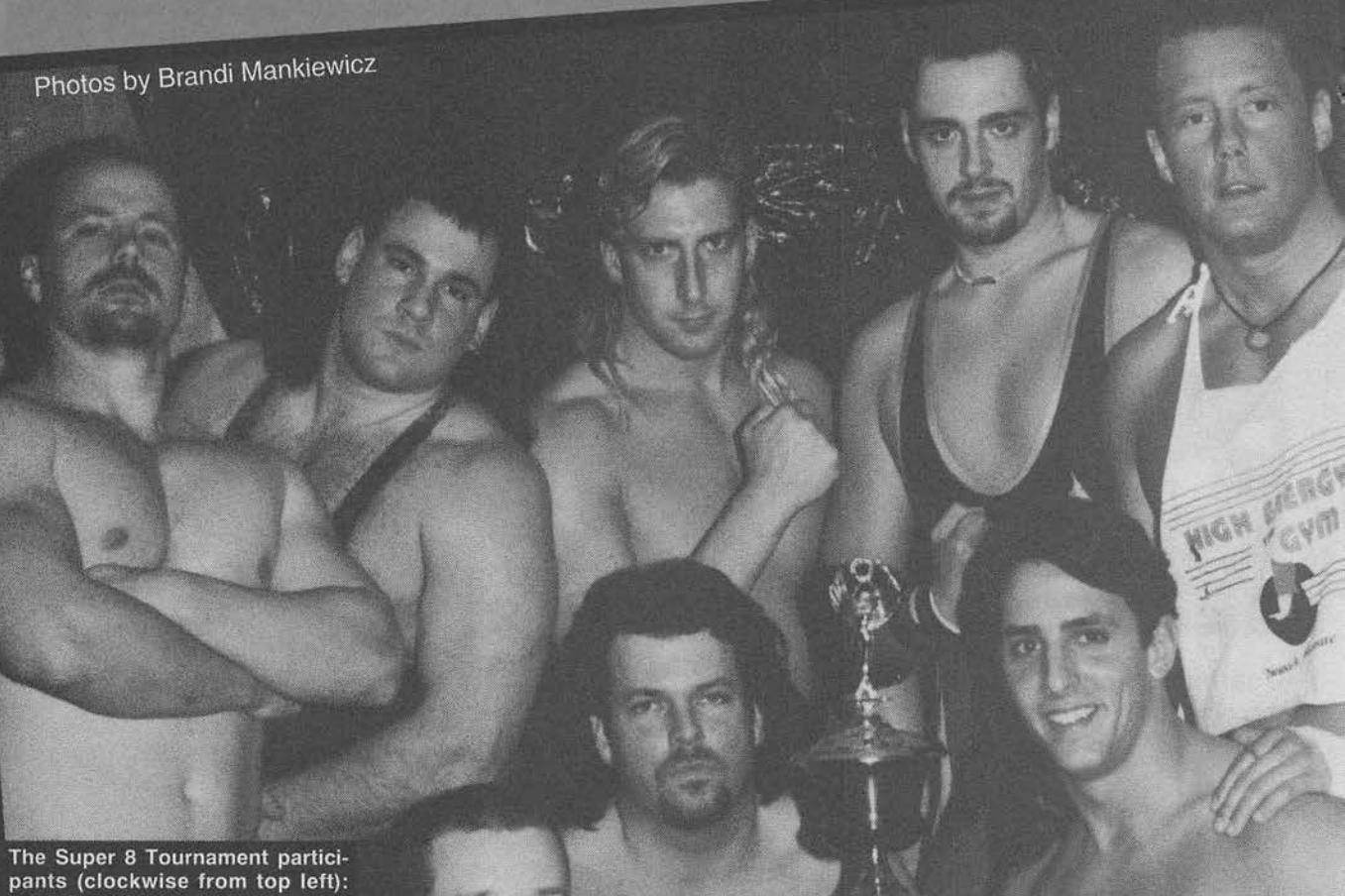
At only 5'9", 216 pounds, Malenko is one of the smallest wrestlers in WCW. The cruiserweight division is packed with small, talented tacti-

cians who are constantly trying to outthink each other. The smartest man usually wins; the man who stops thinking, even for a minute, usually loses.

Dean Malenko reached a crossroads in his career when he lost the cruiserweight title to Syxx. One road led to superstardom. He was already on that route. The other road, the one he took, is going over a cliff. □

THE SUPER

Photos by Brandi Mankiewicz



The Super 8 Tournament participants (clockwise from top left): Ravishing Ronnie, Ace Darling, Devon Storm, Inferno Kid, Cheetah Master, Billy Kidman, Lance Diamond, Reckless Youth.

TOURNAMENT

A Three-Hour War For Independent

8

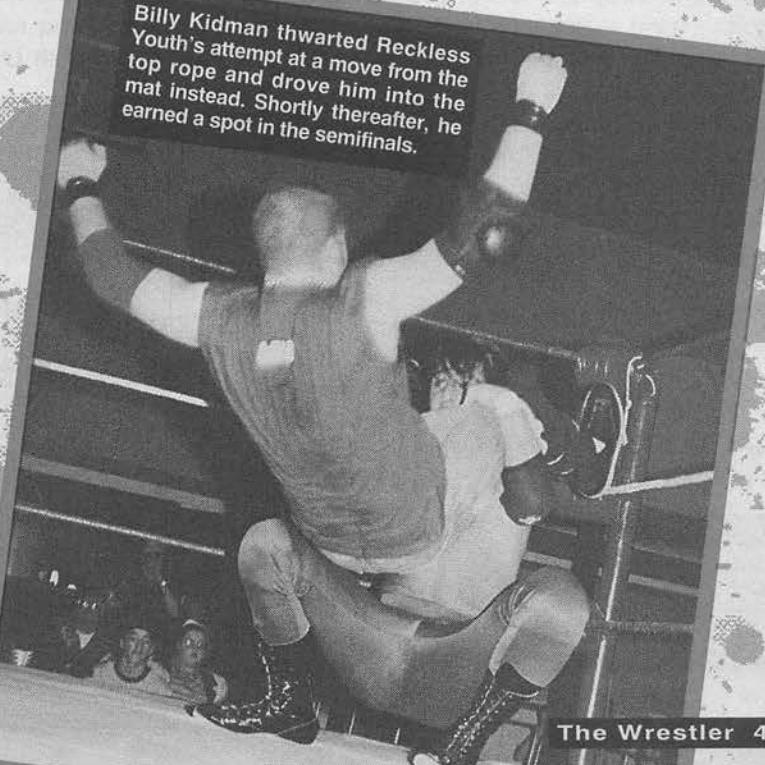
No, it's not a title to determine motel supremacy. Eight of the top independent wrestlers vied for the new ECWA TV title. It was more than a night of outstanding wrestling action. It was a glimpse into the sport's future

By Steve Anderson

WHEN YOU ARE a young wrestler building a career on the independent circuit, you'll generally accept just about any title match you can get. Well, at least you should, because if you can win a title or two in the independents, you'll get the kind of experience you need to make it to that next level—the major federation level. Common sense will tell you that promoters and scouts pay a lot more attention to the champions than they do to the contenders. This is why you see so many of today's young up-and-comers traveling from federation to federation. They're all in search of gold, any gold.

So when the East Coast Wrestling Association, a popular Delaware-based independent with a growing talent roster, announced it would be establishing a new TV title and holding a tournament to determine the first champion, it expected to hear from

Billy Kidman thwarted Reckless Youth's attempt at a move from the top rope and drove him into the mat instead. Shortly thereafter, he earned a spot in the semifinals.



Supremacy



Ace Darling was just too much for Inferno Kid in their quarterfinal match. He nailed him with a beautiful kick to the back of the head en route to getting the pin to advance in the tournament.

Both Kidman and Youth use the Lucha Libre style, and this bout featured planchas, "Frankensteiners," moonsaults, and a myriad other top-rope maneuvers. The highlight was Kidman executing a spectacular shooting star press. He pinned Youth to advance.

Ace Darling vs. Inferno Kid

Ace is not exactly the "darling" of ECWA fans. Instead of focusing on his opponent, Darling spent much of his time berating ringside fans and members of the press before his match. But when the bell rang, Darling honed in on Kid and punished him with a barrage of power moves and leg submission holds. Darling was too much for the overmatched Kid. He pinned him following a superkick.

Lance Diamond vs. Ravishing Ronny

Diamond is another wrestler who would never win a popularity contest in ECWA. But on this night, the rulebreaker, managed by Barry Casino, was full of surprises. Upon entering the ring, he immediately grabbed the ringside microphone and told both Casino,

and Ronny's manager, Dr. Destruction, to leave. This tournament meant so much to him, he said, that he wanted to win it fairly. After Diamond shook Ronny's hand, though, the gentleman in him disappeared. After executing a dizzying array of suplexes, Diamond put his foe away with a Northern Lights version of the move.



Devon Storm's nickname is "Dangerous," and he used his share of high-risk moves against Cheetah Master. Cheetah, however, won with one of his own.

Cheetah Master vs. Devon Storm

Like Kidman, Storm has also competed under the bright lights of WCW. Unfortunately, he has not had much success there. "Dangerous" Devon aggressively attacked Cheetah at the opening bell and never stopped using illegal moves. But Cheetah, managed by Capt. Lou Albano, stayed within the rulebook to the best of his ability and defeated Storm with a "Superfly" dive.

SEMI-FINALS

Cheetah Master vs. Billy Kidman

Cheetah not only had a chance advance to the finals, but also an opportunity to score his second win

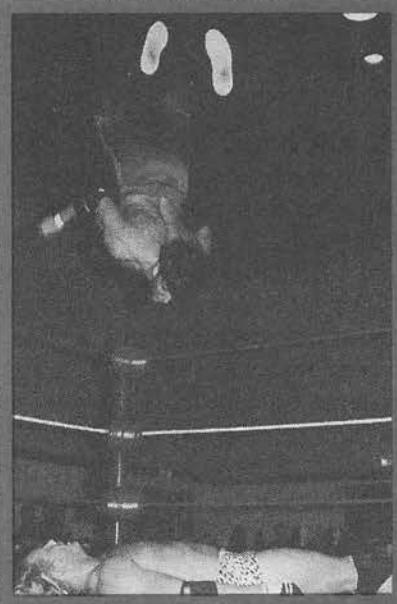


QUARTERFINALS

Billy Kidman vs. Reckless Youth

The first match of the night turned out to be the best match of the night.

The Ravishing Ronny-Lance Diamond quarterfinal match was definitely a high-impact match. Diamond relied on the many versions of his suplex to win it.



Kidman's favorite move is the shooting star press, and he connected with one against Cheetah Master in the semifinals. It wasn't enough; Cheetah prevailed.

FINALS

Ace Darling vs. Cheetah Master

The two finalists were closely matched throughout the entire bout. Darling's WCW tag team partner, Devon Storm, who had been defeated earlier by Cheetah, came out to provide moral support to Darling, but the referee quickly ejected him. It was Cheetah's high-flying style vs. Ace Darling's brawling finesse. In the end, Darling's experience won out; he pinned Cheetah to win the championship.

But that would not be the entire story. Cheetah, always the sportsman, went to congratulate the new champion, who was rejoined by Storm, but he was attacked by the nefarious pair. Diamond then ran out to help Cheetah chase the rule-breakers away. Albano, impressed with the two, lavished praise on them and convinced them to face Darling and Storm in a future tag team bout.

ECWA had a new TV champion. Darling had gained a new title and a new enemy at the same time. Diamond walked out without a belt or Barry Casino, but he had found a new legion of fans, not

over a WCW part-time wrestler in one night. For the first time in any match in the tournament, both combatants honored the rules. The two high-flyers wowed the crowd with numerous high-risk acrobatic maneuvers. Kidman was able to execute a shooting star press, but Cheetah survived that and rallied to upset his opponent.

Ace Darling vs. Lance Diamond

Yes, they were regular tag team partners and they shared the same manager in Casino, but there was a title at stake, so they were not at all reluctant to wrestle each other. Once again, Diamond asked Casino to leave ring-side, but Darling wanted his good-luck charm to stay, so stay he did, and the war was on. In the end, Diamond was close to victory, but Casino pointed out to the referee that Darling's foot was on the bottom rope during a pin attempt. Diamond then decided he had had enough. As he began to jaw with his manager, Darling rolled him up for the pin. After the match, Casino fired Diamond.

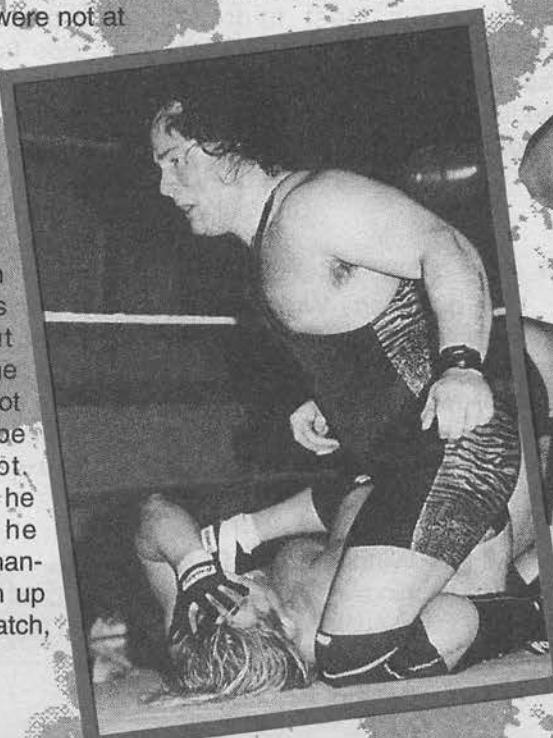
to mention a new tag team partner and a new, more

legendary manager. The fans left satisfied with the show and anxious for the next one to come.

Just another great night for the ECWA ... a night Ace Darling will always remember. □



Going into the night, Ace Darling and Lance Diamond were tag team partners and were both managed by Barry Casino, but they weren't friends during this semi-final match. Darling rolled up Diamond as Diamond argued with Casino.



Darling had too much power for Cheetah in the finals and left him flat on the mat (left). As a result, he became the first ECWA TV champ and got a trophy for his efforts (above). It was an unforgettable night for him.

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)



Dallas Page has clearly emerged as one of WCW's leaders against the NWO in recent months, and reader Jennifer Largo is glad to see it.

good men to fight the NWO, and Page is definitely one of them. Steve Anderson was right when he said that Page is a dangerous wrestler who can turn a disadvantage into an advantage ("DDP's Ph.D: Earning His Degree In Grappology," March 1997). In every match, Page shows the fans and his opponents why he was voted 1995's Most Improved Wrestler by readers of PWI. I think Page will be the great leader WCW needs to rally the WCW troops and dispose of the NWO forever.

JENNIFER LARGO
St. Paul, MN

BLACKJACK BOOM?

I am glad Barry Windham and Justin "Hawk" Bradshaw are finally teaming as The New Blackjacks. I have followed the careers of Barry and his father, Blackjack Mulligan, and I find it heartening to see Barry now carrying on his father's tradition.

Now that Windham and Bradshaw are teaming, it's interesting to note how Barry spoke of Bradshaw right before they started teaming

("Q & A: Barry Windham," April 1997). Barry admitted to thinking a lot about his relationship with Bradshaw and said that he wasn't sure if Bradshaw was an enemy or an ally. Barry seemed to be leaning toward joining forces with.

Now that these two tall Texans have come together, maybe we will soon see Barry with a WWF World tag team belt around his waist once again.

DELORES PINTO
Amarillo, TX

LOWER THAN HOGAN

"Hollywood" Hulk Hogan is not the most hated member of the New World Order ("The NWO's Most Popular Ratings: Why Is Hulk Hogan At The Bottom?" April 1997). My choice for least popular is definitely Eric Bischoff. There is no reason for this man to be with the NWO besides to kiss Hogan's butt in order to gain power and have his ego stroked. I think Hogan had a legitimate reason to turn his back on the fans. He finally got fed up with them booing him anyway, so it was logical for him to tell them to stick it. Bischoff, on the other hand, didn't have the fans on his side for decades and had no reason to turn against them except for purely selfish reasons. Bischoff was supposed to be an impartial executive employee of the promotion, and his turn was probably felt more by the promotion than the fans who just saw him as an executive and a broadcaster.

Bischoff had no fan support to lose by joining the NWO, but he lost his credibility and integrity. Soon he might permanently lose cushy executive job, too.

GAIL MYRON
Dolton, IL □

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 7)

Storm recently won the New Jack City Wrestling light heavyweight belt from his pal but Darling won it back the next day ... **El Mascarado** is the new Century Wrestling Alliance cruiserweight champion after a sensational victory over **The Pink Assassin** ... An old feud that just keeps goin'—“**Dirty White Boy**” **Tony Anthony** beat **Buddy Landell** for the Tennessee Mountain Wrestling heavyweight title in March.

Rob Van Dam was seen hanging around the locker room area during a *WCW Monday Nitro* card in Savannah, Georgia, the day after Uncensored, sparking rumors that he's about to leave ECW for WCW. I can tell you that there's no truth to those rumors. Van Dam lives in Savannah and was just saying hello to several of his friends.

Marc Mero may not return to action until September, as he will have to go through a long rehabilitation process

following the reconstructive knee surgery he had in February ... **Bruce Hart**, one of Bret's brothers, has been signed as a special referee by New York-based Ultimate Championship Wrestling ... **Tully Blanchard** is feuding with **Demolition Ax** in the Virginia-based Independent Professional Wrestling Alliance ... **The Black Scorpion** has beaten **Tony Falk** for the Hardcore Championship Wrestling heavyweight belt.

Psicosis is asking WCW promoters to give him a match against **Ultimo Dragon**'s manager, **Sonny Ono**. “The guy interferes and uses martial arts kicks on me during my matches against Dragon all the time,” the Mexican star said through an interpreter. “If he's so tough, why doesn't he get into the ring and fight like a man?”

Ono insists he has never interfered in a match, but adds that

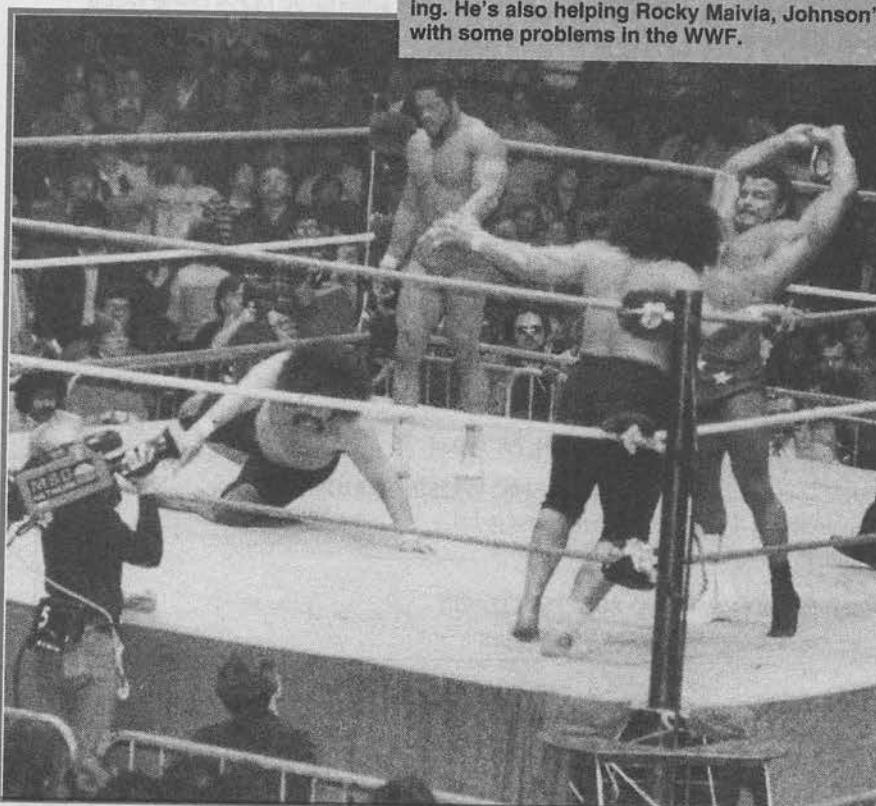
“when I get hit first, I will honorably defend myself.”

Tony Atlas says he's thrilled to be helping out **Rocky Maivia** in the WWF.

“You know, Rocky's dad and I, **Rocky Johnson**, were World tag team champions a long time ago,” Atlas said. “He used to talk about how he wanted his son to follow in his footsteps one day, and Rocky Maivia is making his dad real proud. Rocky Johnson does not want to come back and wrestle right now, but I never left, so this is all I know. When I saw Maivia in trouble against **The Sultan**, I couldn't help getting involved. We've become real close now, and I'm advising him a lot. If Sultan and **Bob Backlund** and **The Iron Sheik** keep giving him trouble, he knows he can count on me to team up with him and help him kick their butts out of the WWF!”

That's what's happening. I'll see you at the matches! □

Tony Atlas and Rocky Johnson beat The Wild Samoans for the WWF World tag team title in 1983, and though Johnson is retired, Atlas is still competing. He's also helping Rocky Maivia, Johnson's son, with some problems in the WWF.





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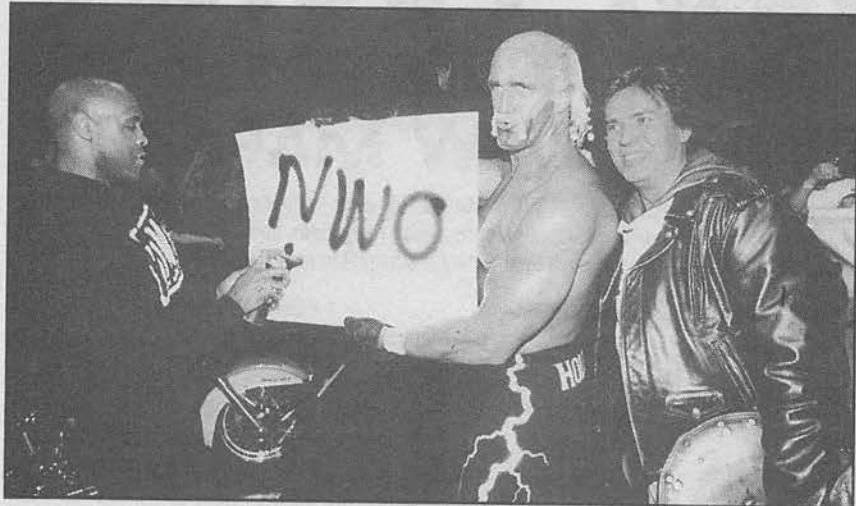
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NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 8)



Members of the NWO love to spray-paint the group's initials all over the place, and Rodman has already shown that he enjoys doing that, too. He probably won't have to worry about getting suspended in WCW.

NWO. Many think that by choosing the NWO, he is escaping the heat of the NBA powers-that-be. Frankly, I don't see it that way.

Rodman's infamous groin-kicking incident directed at a cameraman in Minneapolis was a sickening display. NBA commissioner David Stern did the right thing and suspended him for 11 games. With that suspension came a caveat. If Rodman erred again, he could find himself in permanent exile.

But true to form, Rodman returned. And before he could even work up a sweat, he deliberately punched a fellow NBA player in, you guessed it, the groin. He was immediately suspended him for one whole game. *Ouch!* Why not a

more harsh penalty? Well, it was in the heat of a sanctioned NBA game.

Excuse me? Is that heat? I think not. The inaction of the NBA where Rodman is concerned mirrors WCW inactions as it pertains to its own bad boy, Eric Bischoff, WCW's senior vice president who ran amuck in the federation while pledging allegiance to the NWO. Four months later, WCW decided to finally act with a (*gasp*) suspension. Not a firing, but a suspension, courtesy of Turner Sports President Dr. Harvey Schiller. So tell me, Doc, what does Bischoff have to do to get fired? Ally with the WWF?

So Rodman must look at all

these spineless WCW decisions and realize WCW will make a good second home. All he did was jeopardize two men's abilities to father offspring. Bischoff tried to undermine the organization that signs his paychecks. Every man has a heaven. Rodman has found his.

I could sit here and pontificate on the sickening acts, both on and off the court, of Dennis Rodman, but frankly, that would be pointless. He is now in an organization within an organization that endorses such behavior. In fact, groin attacks may be looked upon as too lenient and paling in comparison to what the NWO could do.

With Rodman's fists and feet aimed at every available wrestler's protective cup, WCW executives, true to form, will likely sit back for about four months and decide upon a serious punishment. Perhaps Rodman will have to write 1,000 times on a blackboard, "I will not boot men in the groin."

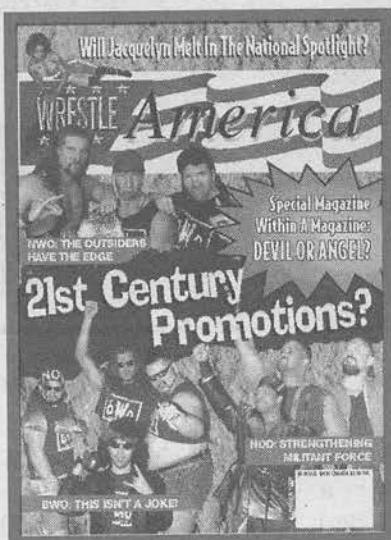
So now perhaps the colorful hair of Rodman will turn black and white. Perhaps a black base with a white stripe, like that of a skunk. Appropriate, since every decision that WCW has made regarding the NWO has stunk. WCW has inadvertently created another Frankenstein monster. They have no one to blame but themselves.

WCW is getting hard to root for in this war. □

TOP 10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT WCW'S BROADCASTERS

10. After every show, they all get together for a game of Strip Parcheesi.
9. Dusty Rhodes' name translated into Swahili is actually "Belli Welli."
8. Lee Marshall conducts weekly seminars on the fine art of needlepoint.
7. Fights regularly break out over Larry Zbyszko's delicious homemade Bundt cakes.
6. Bobby Heenan does a mean Fonzie imitation.
5. Mike Tenay is constantly shoving his Amway business down everyone's throats.
4. No one has seen Eric Bischoff and his "twin sister Erica" in the same place at the same time.
3. Tony Schiavone—World Thumbwrestling champion!
2. Dusty Rhodes' name translated into Arabic is actually "Klubberin."
1. All of them just loved Steve McMichael's dog, Pepe ... in a light wine sauce.

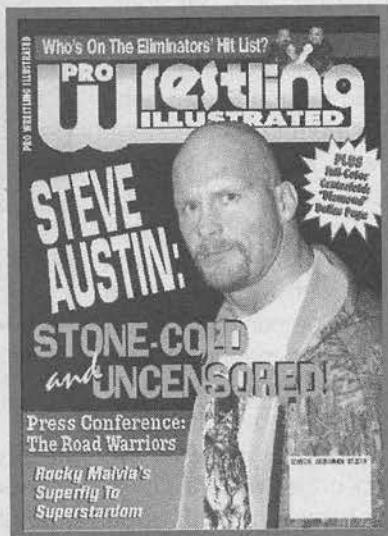
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All this—and much more!—in the July 1997 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*

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CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 14)

two-count. Ace recovered and backed Bonet into his corner, where Mest waited to drive his knee into Bonet's back.

Brown then entered the ring to aid his partner, but the referee stopped him in mid-ring. As those two argued, Mest and Darling double-teamed Bonet.

Several minutes later, believing Bonet was finished, Darling climbed to the top rope, but Bonet was able to move out of the way of his splash. Bonet finally rolled to his corner and tagged Brown, who bounded into the ring.

Darling was the first to fall to Brown's attack, getting rocked by a clothesline. Brown then whipped Mest into the dazed Darling and nailed Darling with a huge splash as Mest was attempting to roll out of the ring near his manager, Judd the Stud. Brown covered Darling, but Judd and Mest moved Darling's feet under the ropes and told the referee, who broke up the cover attempt. As Brown got up, Judd pulled Darling from the ring, and the champions headed for the locker room, accepting a countout loss.

In other bouts: Col. Jihad Hussein beat The Cremator in a loser-leaves-PCW steel cage match ... PCW Americas champ Lance Diamond defeated Glen Osbourne in a steel cage match ... Dave Patera pinned Mike Quackenbush ... Judd the Stud pinned PCW junior heavyweight champ Pat Shamrock to win the title .. Brittany Brown defeated Brandi Alexander ... Vinnie Biondo & Rockin' Ronnie beat Diablos Macabre & Lucifer Grim ... Maxx Crimson, Chef D.Z. Gillespie, & Mr. Ooh La La beat Troy, Horace, & Yancy Mest to win the inaugural PCW six-man tag team title ... Heavyweight champion Julio Sanchez pinned Cheetah Master.

Philadelphia, PA (Correspondent—Timothy A. Walker): ECW



Tommy Dreamer kicks ECW heavyweight champ Raven in the midst of a wild triangle match that also involved Stevie Richards. Raven eventually pinned Richards, his former lackey.

heavyweight champion Raven pinned Stevie Richards to win a triangle match that also included Tommy Dreamer, but not before most of ECW's wrestlers got involved.

The match was originally scheduled to be a tag team match pitting Raven and Richards against Dreamer and a mystery partner whose name was to be picked from a hat. When the name drawn from the hat was that of Richards, the format of the bout was totally changed.

Raven ordered Stevie to stand in the corner as he and Dreamer started brawling in the ring, but they soon brawled their way out of the ring and into the crowd.

At that point, the locker room emptied out, and the match became a massive brawl. Finally, the ring cleared out, but several wrestlers continued battling at ringside. New Jack dove from the top of the entrance to the dressing room area onto the crowd of wrestlers below as most of them

fought their way back to the dressing rooms.

Back in the ring, though, Raven and his former sidekick Richards started pounding each other. Raven eventually nailed Richards with a DDT and pinned him to retain the title as Brian Lee choke-slammed Dreamer through a table at ringside.

In other bouts: Tommy Rich & Little Guido beat Chris Chetti & Tracey Smothers ... Taz beat Rob Van Dam ... Sabu defeated Spike Dudley ... Chris Candido defeated Louie Spicoli in a best-of-three-falls match ... The Sandman pinned B. Mahoney ... D-Von & Buh Buh Ray Dudley defeated The Eliminators to win the ECW tag team title ... ECW TV champ Shane Douglas beat Pit Bull I in an "I Quit" match ... Terry Funk defeated Brian Lee. □

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April 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Luger, Woman, Piper-Heenan, Travis.

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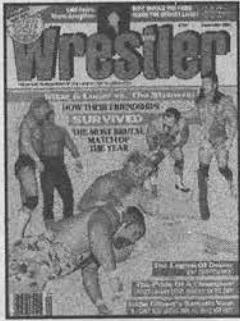
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September 1991/Stories include: Steiners vs. Sting & Luger, LOD, Cactus.

November 1991/Stories include: Luger, Steamboat, Piper, Global.

January 1992/Stories include: LOD, Badd, Hughes, Roberts, Gossett.

February 1992/Stories include: Flair, Simmons, Santana, Backlund.

May 1992/Stories include: Flair, Anderson & Eaton, Piper, Rhodes, USWA.

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August 1992/Stories include: Warrior, Bunkhouse, Undertaker-Roberts, Sting.

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August 1995/Stories include: Diesel, LT, Hogan, powerful people, Gargoyle.

October 1995/Stories include: Backlund, Steiners, Austin & Pillman, Miss Texas.

November 1995/Stories include: Flair-Savage, Mabel, Jarrett-Ramon, Renegade.

Winter 1995/Stories include: Sting-Hogan, Steiners, Yankem, Bodies, Arn.

January 1996/Stories include: Hogan, Douglas, anniversary review of 30 years.

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(Continued from page 16)

ing for the WWF, and I've been featured on *Entertainment Tonight* and on MTV's *Singled Out* and on some other shows. I might even get into some movies one of these days. I'm in demand. I'm traveling all the time, and I just haven't found the right wrestler. There are plenty of really fine ones in the WWF right now, but I'm a picky woman. I've got very high standards. With my track record, you know I won't spend my valuable time working with just anyone. The men I manage know they gotta deliver the gold to me very fast or they're history."

• • •

Q: "This is a question for The Nasty Boys, Jerry Sags and Brian Knobs: We know what you guys are like in the ring, but what do you guys do for fun when you're



The Nasty Boys occasionally like to goof off when they're doing interviews in front of a camera. They just like to make other people's lives a bit harder.

not wrestling? I bet you do some crazy stuff." —Bianca Bennett, Poughkeepsie, NY

A: "If we're not feelin' real nasty," said Sags, "then we do stuff that everybody else does, like watching sports, going to basketball and football games, just hangin' out and bein' obnoxious. But when we're feelin' really nasty, we start all kinds of trouble. Sometimes we just run up to people on the street and scare 'em. Or we'll make phony phone calls and have like 10 pizzas with anchovies delivered to someone we hate. We even like to do nasty stuff at the arena. Sometimes they'll ask us to do an interview that they're gonna show on TV later. Me and Knobs will go on and on for a few minutes and then we'll start sayin' bad words just to make the cameraman mad. Then we'll promise them we won't do it again, and they'll believe us, and we'll do it again anyway. If it makes someone else's life harder, we'll do it!"

• • •

Q: "I'd like to ask Roddy Piper a question: Will it bother you if

you don't beat Hulk Hogan for the WCW World title before you finally retire for good?" —Andrea Rader, Fort Pierce, FL

A: "The day I walk away from my last fight, that will be it," Piper said. "No regrets, no nothing. I already got me a videotape of that match me and Hogan had at Starrcade. It shows real clear that I won. Same thing for that Super-Brawl match. I had him beat until Hogan and Savage started playin' tricks with the referee's head. I'm the better man and the bigger icon. Case closed. That's good enough for me. If I take his belt away from him before I'm done, that's great, but this ain't about a belt. I cared about titles for a long time, but not so much anymore. I proved what I had to prove in WCW. When I leave, I know I'll be able to sleep at night." □

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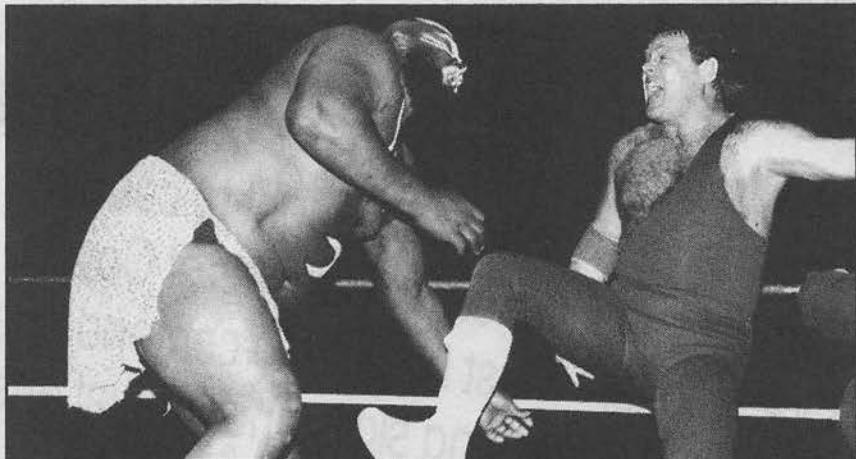
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SCRAPBOOK

(Continued from page 33)

MAY/JUNE
1992

FORMER WWF AND NWA world champion Buddy Rogers died on June 26 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, four days after suffering two strokes ... Frontier Martial Arts Wrestling sanctioned one of the most frightening matches in history, a flaming barbed-wire bout pitting Tarzan Goto and Mr. Onita against The Sheik and Sabu on May 5. Extreme heat and the potential for smoke inhalation forced an evacuation of the building, and the bout was ruled a no-contest after just four minutes. The Sheik was rushed to the hospital with serious burns on his back. Sabu, his protege, screamed after the match, "We come back!" ... Steve Austin defeated Barry Windham on May 23 in Atlanta to regain the WCW TV title ... Rick and Scott Steiner regained the WCW World tag team belts from Arn Anderson and Bobby Eaton on May 3 at Chicago's UIC Pavilion ... After spending 68 years in the wrestling business, Don Owen relinquished control of Pacific Northwest Wrestling on May 30. During Owen's regime, wrestlers like



Jerry Lawler was only on his 12th reign as USWA heavyweight champion five years ago. He had to beat the monstrous Kamala to start that reign.

Roddy Piper, Ric Flair, and Curt Hennig made their wrestling homes in Portland ... Stan Frazier, best known as Uncle Elmer, died on June 30 at his home in Biloxi, Mississippi, as a result of complications from diabetes ... Nikita Koloff spurned offers from Paul E. Dangerously to join his Dangerous Alliance ... The Ultimate Warrior was gearing up for a SummerSlam title match against his most bitter rival, WWF World champion Randy Savage ... On June 23, The Super Destroyers became the first ECW tag team champions by defeating The Night Breed in the final match of a four-team tournament ... Dick

Slater and The Barbarian defeated Michael Hayes and Jimmy Garvin to win the WCW U.S. tag team title on June 25 in Kansas City, Missouri. They would be the last champions, as the title was abandoned a month later ... Bill Watts became WCW's vice president of wrestling operations. His first act was to make Ole Anderson a special troubleshooting referee ... Jerry Lawler

won the USWA title for the 12th time when he defeated Kamala on May 4 in Memphis. His reign lasted just six weeks, as he was defeated by Eddie Gilbert on June 15 in Memphis ... Scotty Flamingo defeated WCW light heavyweight champion Brian Pillman to win the title on June 20 in Mobile, Alabama ... Brian Christopher's first USWA Southern title reign officially ended when the title was held up following a controversial match between him and Tom Prichard on June 22 in Memphis. Prichard won the belt by beating Christopher a week later.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Randy Savage; 2—Bret Hart; 3—The Ultimate Warrior; 4—Shawn Michaels; 5—Papa Shango; 6—Ric Flair; 7—The Undertaker; 8—Crush; 9—Rick Martel; 10—Tito Santana.

WCW RATINGS: 1—Sting; 2—Rick Rude; 3—Brian Pillman; 4—Rick Steamboat; 5—Steve Austin; 6—Barry Windham; 7—Nikita Koloff; 8—Terrence Taylor; 9—Dustin Rhodes; 10—Cactus Jack.

TAG TEAM RATINGS: 1—Rick & Scott Steiner; 2—The Freebirds; 3—Money Inc; 4—The Natural Disasters; 5—The Legion of Doom; 6—Stan Lane & Tom Prichard; 7—The Moondogs; 8—Gary Young & Steven Dane; 9—Steve Doll & The Grappler; 10—The Nasty Boys. □



One of the hot feuds in WCW in the spring of 1992 saw Rick and Scott Steiner battling Arn Anderson and Bobby Eaton. The Steiners won the WCW tag belts from their rivals in May of '92.

training program. Call Mr. Radisson at 319-555-9134, Tuesday-Friday, 12 noon-5 pm. Equal opportunity employer.

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Experienced individual sought to counter Dangerous Alliance's "Director of Covert Operations." Must be able to contend against formidable wrestling skills and martial arts. Experience in handling double-, triple-, quadruple-, and quintuple-teamings a plus.

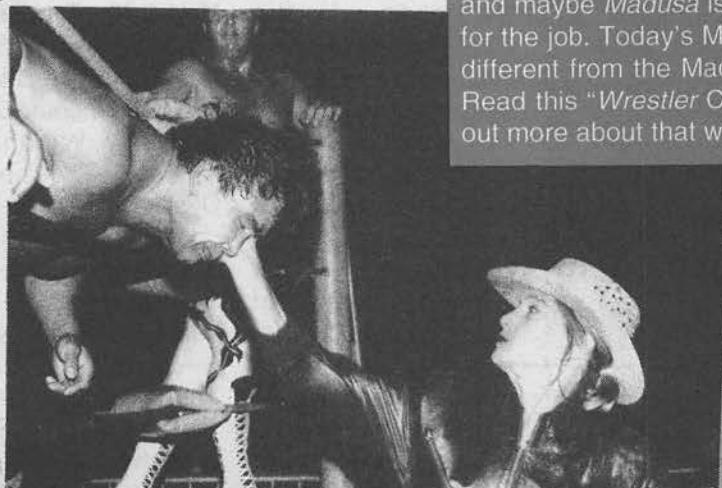
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WRESTLER CLASSIC!

Right now, WCW needs a woman to neutralize Miss Jacquelyn ... and maybe Madusa is the right one for the job. Today's Madusa sure is different from the Madusa of 1992. Read this "Wrestler Classic" to find out more about that woman!

With constant interference, the "First Lady of WCW" is at the top of Rick Steamboat's hit list (right). Her style of dress is in stark contrast to her ringside demeanor (far right).





Madusa catches Barry Windham by surprise, jumping on his back. When she is at ringside, fan favorites must be on their guard at all times.

By Liz Hunter

THE GAME IS Jeopardy. The Category: Professional Wrestling for \$1,000.

The Answer: She slips into the ring and, with a deft flick of her leg, karate-kicks an opponent in the throat.

The Question: Who is Madusa?

What is wrong with the scene described above?

The answer to the question to the answer is: The opponent she kicked wasn't another woman—it wasn't even her opponent—and Madusa wasn't even wrestling! But this game, of which Madusa is the undisputed champion, threatens to drag WCW into a nightmare of sexual politics.

As the anointed "Director of Covert Operations" of The Dangerous Alliance, Madusa has used her considerable wrestling skills to intervene in match after match in-

volving Alliance members. The case described above involved Rick Steamboat, who slapped Madusa after she viciously kicked him in the throat. Steamboat immediately apologized, but his action gave the Alliance all the reason they needed to sneak-attack and nearly cripple Steamboat.

Interfering women are certainly not new to professional wrestling. But rarely has a woman possessed the physical skills of the former AWA women's champion.

"A karate kick to the throat is a karate kick to the throat," Steamboat said after the match. "If it's delivered by a woman who knows what she's doing, it can be as lethal as a man's."

And Madusa definitely knows what she's doing. Still considered one of the leading women wrestlers in the world, Madusa has

found herself without competition in WCW. Rather than move on to federations containing a larger female talent pool, Madusa jumped when Paul E. Dangerously offered her a job.

"I like it here," Madusa says now. "I have my home, my friends and family. It doesn't pay for me to move. For someone like me, good female competition is impossible to find. There may be one or two women who could give me a decent match, but I don't feel like searching the earth for them."

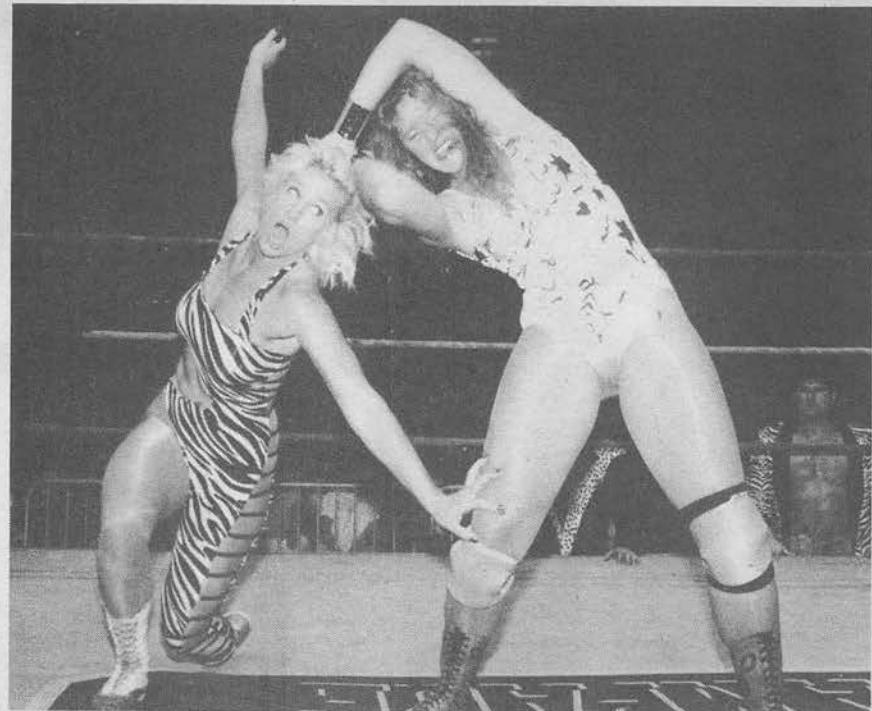
"I am secure and happy working for the Alliance," said Madusa, proudly displaying her new diamond brooch. "Women work alongside men in police and fire departments, and on the battlefields. I don't see why pro wrestling should be any different. If the guys can't take it, that's just too damn bad."

Thus far, Madusa has continued performing her "job" to the delight of Dangerously and the Alliance. Rather, it is the wrestlers she attacks who are at a loss at what to do.

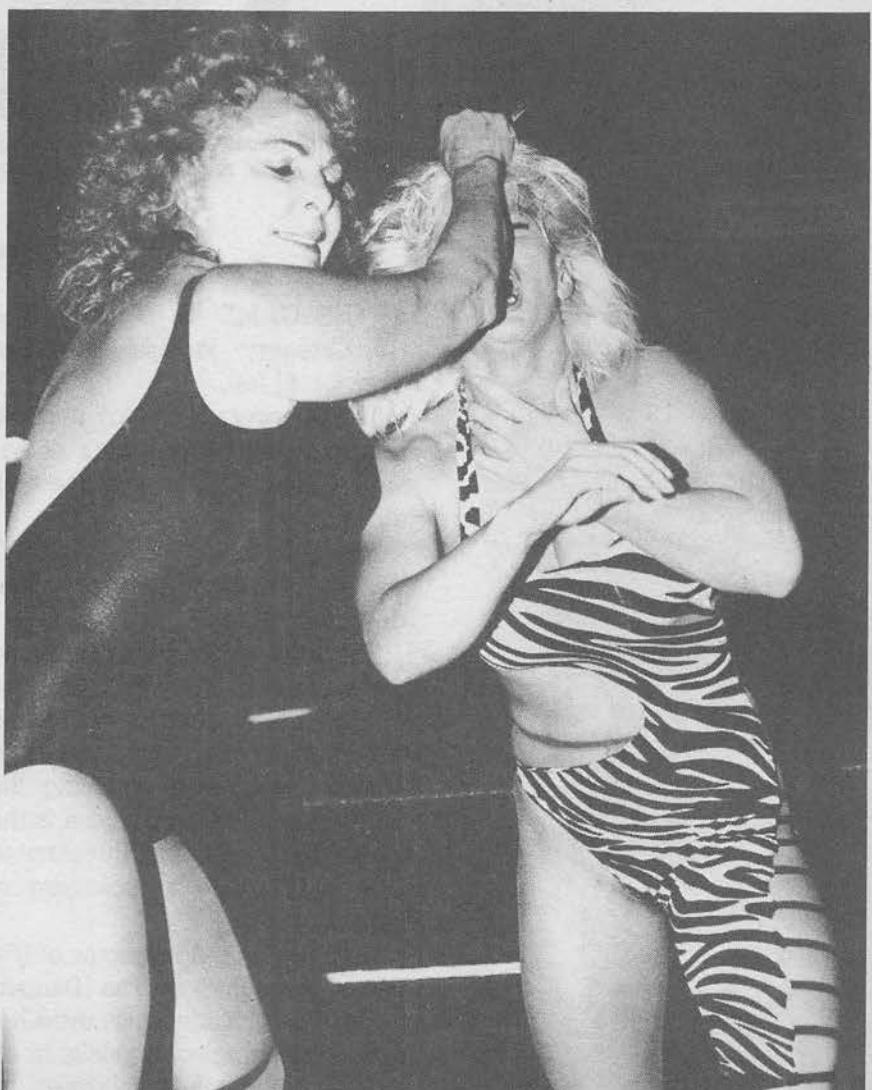
"I slapped her and felt like a jerk immediately," explained Steamboat. "I am not accustomed—and strongly against anyone—hitting women. Even if they pose a danger to me, which Madusa clearly does, I'm uncomfortable in retaliating. She's deadly, but I just can't do it."

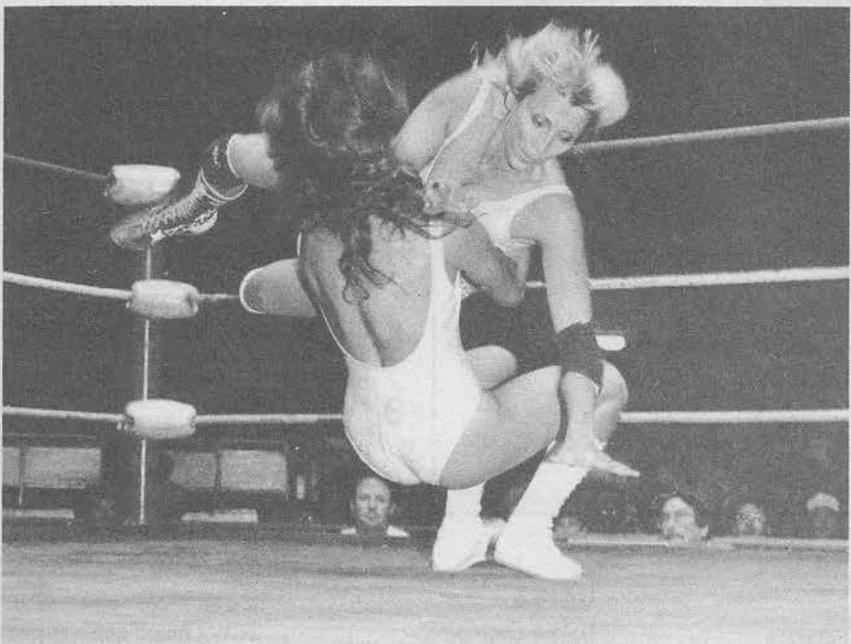
But what is the alternative? "I think WCW should ban Madusa from ringside," said light heavyweight champion Brian Pillman, whom Madusa has challenged to an actual match. "That's the only way to solve this problem. Otherwise, something horrible is going to happen to her that will make everyone in the federation look bad."

In urging WCW to ban Madusa, Pillman raises a familiar cry, oft repeated but impossible to enforce. The bottom line is that today's pro



What women could conceivably neutralize Madusa? Wendi Richter (above) or Fabulous Moolah (below) are two possibilities. Both have had success against Madusa.





The strength of LPWA champion Terri Power (top) could deter Madusa's actions, as could the experience and skill of veteran Susan Sexton (above). After being the victim of repeated outside interference (below), Steamboat finally lost control and slapped Madusa in the face.



wrestling is as much about the antics of Madusa and Dangerously as it is about the ring skills of Pillman and Jushin Liger. Fans pay to see the entire package. Thus, the problem isn't how to get rid of Madusa—it is how to *neutralize* her.

Rumor has it that Missy Hyatt, fed up with Madusa's brazen tactics, will challenge her to a match. One WCW wrestler, speaking on the condition of anonymity, thinks it's a stupid idea.

"Hyatt is a bimbo trained to talk

and walk, a blabbering pair of D-cups," he said. "If a man has trouble handling Madusa, what the hell can Missy do? What we need in the WCW is another woman capable of neutralizing Madusa. Someone like Sensational Sherri or Terri Power, maybe. It's no easy task. Madusa is no valet—she's tough as nails."

"No one wants to see a man hit a woman," he continued. "So until they find a girl who can handle her, Madusa is going to have carte blanche in this federation."

Steamboat was very receptive to the idea. In fact, he'd been thinking along the same lines.

"I've been looking in my gym for a woman strong enough to handle that witch," Steamboat said. "I know it takes more than strength, but I'm willing to train anyone who is interested. Fans think this is some kind of joke. Another quarter-inch and Madusa would have broken my windpipe, which I've had trouble with since Randy Savage attacked me in 1987. Personally, I'd love to see someone such as Power, or maybe Susan Sexton come here and do some good. This is no laughing matter. Madusa's gotta be stopped. Call Wendi Richter! Call Fabulous Moolah, even! This has gone on long enough."

A valet won't do. Women such as Tessa or Miss Jennifer just stand there and look beautiful. Skilled businesswomen such as Alexandra York or Vivacious Veronica could formulate a plan, but they wouldn't be able to carry it out. What WCW needs is a woman—a skilled fighter—to even the sides for the fan favorites.

Right now, the Director of Covert Operations isn't very concerned.

"Unless Supergirl is in town, I'm not worried," Madusa said with an evil laugh. "There isn't a woman on this planet who scares me."

Not yet, anyway. □

Wrestler

THE

TOP 10

1 THE UNDERTAKER

328, parts unknown
(5) WWF World champion

2 LEX LUGER

265, Chicago, IL
(6) No. 2 contender: WCW World title

3 BRET HART

235, Calgary, Alberta
(3) No. 2 contender: WWF World title

4 THE GIANT

430, parts unknown
(-) No. 3 contender: WCW World title

5 STEVE AUSTIN

241, Dallas, TX
(9) No. 3 contender: WWF World title

6 DEAN MALENKO

216, Tampa, FL
(10) U.S. heavyweight champion

7 SID VICIOUS

318, West Memphis, AR
(1) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

8 DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

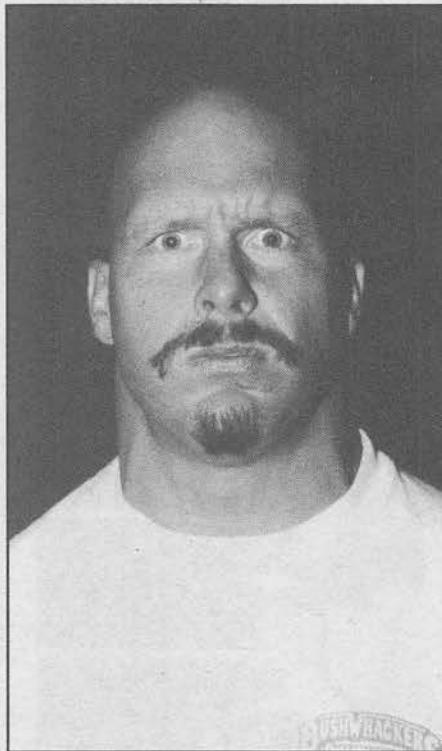
260, Tampa, FL
(-) No. 4 contender: WCW World title

9 ROCKY MAIVIA

272, Pearl City, HI
(8) WWF Intercontinental champion

10 RAVEN

235, Short Hills, NJ
(-) ECW heavyweight champion



Steve Austin

WCW

World Champion:

HULK HOGAN

(C) 275, Venice Beach, CA

1—DEAN MALENKO

(6) 216, Tampa, FL

2—LEX LUGER

(3) 265, Chicago, IL

3—THE GIANT

(2) 430, parts unknown

4—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

(7) 260, Tampa, FL

5—RANDY SAVAGE

(-) 237, Sarasota, FL

6—JEFF JARRETT

(8) 230, Nashville, TN

7—CHRIS JERICHO

(-) 225, Vancouver, British Columbia

8—CHRIS BENOIT

(-) 218, Edmonton, Alberta

9—PRINCE IAUKEA

(10) 219, Honolulu, HI

10—KEVIN SULLIVAN

(-) 252, Boston, MA

WWF

World Champion:

THE UNDERTAKER

(2) 328, parts unknown

1—ROCKY MAIVIA

(1) 272, Pearl City, HI

2—BRET HART

(3) 235, Calgary, Alberta

3—STEVE AUSTIN

(4) 241, Dallas, TX

4—SID VICIOUS

(C) 318, West Memphis, AR

5—MANKIND

(10) 277, Truth or Consequences, NM

6—AHMED JOHNSON

(5) 255, Pearl River, MS

7—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY

(8) 279, Greenwich, CT

8—GOLDUST

(9) 254, Austin, TX

9—SAVIO VEGA

(-) 260, Vega Alta, Puerto Rico

10—THE SULTAN

(-) 283, Tehran, Iran

USWA

USWA Champion:

JERRY LAWLER

(C) 234, Memphis, TN

1—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER

(3) 230, Memphis, TN

2—ELIJAH

(1) 273, parts unknown

3—TANK

(-) 401, Johannesburg, South Africa

4—KING REGINALD

(-) 233, Memphis, TN

5—STEVEN DUNN

(5) 240, Tampa, FL

6—MABEL

(-) 568, Harlem, NY

7—BILL DUNDEE

(6) 219, Melbourne, Australia

8—BRAKUS

(-) 275, Berlin, Germany

9—MIKE SAMPLES

(8) 252, Indianapolis, IN

10—DUTCH MANTEL

(-) 224, Oil Trough, TX

ECW

ECW Champion:

RAVEN

(C) 235, Short Hills, NJ

1—SHANE DOUGLAS

(1) 240, Pittsburgh, PA

2—STEVIE RICHARDS

(10) 227, Philadelphia, PA

3—TERRY FUNK

(7) 247, Amarillo, TX

4—TAZ

(5) 248, Red Hook, NY

5—SABU

(6) 220, Bombay

6—PIT BULL II

(-) 271, Philadelphia, PA

7—THE SANDMAN

(3) 244, Philadelphia, PA

8—BRIAN LEE

(9) 251, Los Angeles, CA

9—CHRIS CANDIDO

(8) 226, Carteret, NJ

10—TOMMY DREAMER

(2) 245, Yonkers, NY

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

MOST POPULAR

1	STING
260	Venice Beach, CA
Last issue:	unrated
2	AHMED JOHNSON
255	Pearl River, MS
Last issue:	No. 2 Most Popular
3	DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE
260	Tampa, FL
Last issue:	No. 4 Most Popular
4	THE UNDERTAKER
328	parts unknown
Last issue:	No. 5 Most Popular
5	RODDY PIPER
247	Glasgow, Scotland
Last issue:	No. 3 Most Popular
6	RIC FLAIR
243	Minneapolis, MN
Last issue:	unrated
7	THE GIANT
430	parts unknown
Last issue:	No. 1 Most Popular
8	SHAWN MICHAELS
234	San Antonio, TX
Last issue:	unrated
9	LEX LUGER
265	Chicago, IL
Last issue:	No. 6 Most Popular
10	GOLDUST
254	Austin, TX
Last issue:	No. 9 Most Popular

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:	SHINYA HASHIMOTO
(C)	287, Gisu, Japan
1 — MASA CHONO	(2) 235, Tokyo, Japan
2 — KEIJI MUTO	(-) 245, Tokyo, Japan
3 — RIKI CHOSHU	(6) 246, Yamaguchi, Japan
4 — KENSUKE SASAKI	(7) 233, Tokyo, Japan
5 — SHIRO KOSHINAKA	(10) 225, Tokyo, Japan
6 — TATSUMI FUJINAMI	(-) 234, Oita, Japan
7 — HIROYOSHI TENZAN	(4) 270, Tokyo, Japan
8 — SATOSHI KOJIMA	(-) 223, Tokyo, Japan
9 — JUSHIN LIGER	(1) 206, Hiroshima, Japan
10 — SHINJIRO OTANI	(-) 215, Yokohama, Japan

MOST HATED

1	BRET HART
235	Calgary, Alberta
Last issue:	No. 7 Most Popular
2	HULK HOGAN
275	Venice Beach, CA
Last issue:	No. 3 Most Hated
3	RANDY SAVAGE
237	Sarasota, FL
Last issue:	No. 1 Most Hated
4	KEVIN NASH
356	Detroit, MI
Last issue:	No. 5 Most Hated
5	FAAROOQ
260	Perry, GA
Last issue:	No. 9 Most Hated
6	SCOTT HALL
290	Miami, FL
Last issue:	No. 4 Most Hated
7	STEVE AUSTIN
241	Dallas, TX
Last issue:	No. 2 Most Hated
8	HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY
279	Greenwich, CT
Last issue:	unrated
9	KEVIN SULLIVAN
252	Boston, MA
Last issue:	No. 6 Most Hated
10	STEVE McMICHAEL
270	Austin, TX
Last issue:	unrated

For period ended April 1, 1997

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of these issues in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only, and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a first-place rating, nine for second place, and so on. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, with a possible maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

1—SHAWN MICHAELS.....	70 points
2—THE GIANT.....	58 points
3—SID VICIOUS.....	57 points
4—LEX LUGER.....	48 points
5—STEVE AUSTIN.....	45 points

TAG TEAMS

1—SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH	70 points
2—HARLEM HEAT	70 points
3—OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH	65 points
4—HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN	41 points
5—THE NASTY BOYS	41 points

CANADIAN WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Bobby Jay; 1—Chad Ripley; 2—Robby Royce; 3—E.Z. Ryder; 4—Todd Myers; 5—Brian Jewel; 6—Crusher Carlsen; 7—Brother Midnite; 8—John Cozman; 9—Bugsy Sluggo; 10—Fireheart.

CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Kevin Sullivan; 1—Tony Rumble; 2—Vic Steamboat; 3—Knuckle Nelson; 4—Star Warrior; 5—Pink Assassin; 6—El Mascarado; 7—Dungeon Master; 8—Tony Atlas; 9—Rick Fuller; 10—Shabah.

INT'L PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Brick Bronsky; 1—Bam Bam Bigelow; 2—King Kong Bundy; 3—Frank Stelletto; 4—Dean Powers; 5—Julio Sanchez; 6—Dave Powers; 7—Reckless Youth; 8—Johnny Graham; 9—Devon Storm; 10—Inferno Kid.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Glen Osbourne; 1—Ace Darling; 2—Cheetah Master; 3—Lance Diamond; 4—Viper; 5—Boogie Woogie Brown; 6—Devon Storm; 7—Ravishing Ronnie; 8—Armageddon; 9—Billy Kidman; 10—Reckless Youth.

NORTH AMERICAN ALL-STAR WRESTLING: Champion—Colorado Kid; 1—Ben Jordan; 2—Buddy Landell; 3—Tommy Rich; 4—Scruffin' Hillbilly; 5—Justin St. John; 6—Doug Gilbert; 7—Chris Michaels; 8—Farren Foxx; 9—Cody Montana; 10—Motley Cruz.

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Julio Sanchez; 1—Lance Diamond; 2—Cheetah Master; 3—Judd the Stud; 4—Ace Darling; 5—Pat Shamrock; 6—Mark Mest; 7—Glen Osbourne; 8—Boogie Woogie Brown; 9—D.Z. Gillespie; 10—Diabolos Macabre.

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Italian Stallion; 1—Madd Maxxine; 2—George South; 3—Terry Austin; 4—Mabel; 5—Cruel Connection II; 6—Masked Maniac; 7—Chris Hamrick; 8—Gladiator II; 9—Tyrono Knox; 10—Flaming Youth.

WORLD WRESTLING COUNCIL: Champion—Title held up; 1—Carlos Colon; 2—Jungle Jim Steele; 3—Chuck Singer; 4—Pablo Marquez; 5—Abdullah the Butcher; 6—Invader; 7—Ray Gonzales; 8—Hurricane Castillo Jr.; 9—Ram Man; 10—Chicky Starr.

Ratings

ANALYSIS

Return of one hero ... and the fall of another? Wasn't it great to see **Sting** dropping down from the rafters to beat up various members of the **New World Order** at the end of *WCW Uncensored*? Even if you like the NWO and cheer for them on occasion, you have to admit it was a spectacular moment. Our own senior editor, **Bill Apter**, who was at ringside photographing the event,



Bret Hart

said the ovation Sting received when he made his dramatic appearance was as loud as any he had heard in all his years covering the sport.

At this point, there is no question that the "Stinger," even though he's still not talking, is the most popular man in wrestling today. Even when

it looked like he had joined the NWO, people were cheering for him and chanting his name, but he's more popular now than he has ever been. It's good to see him back on top of the Most Popular rankings in our magazine.

The one question we have regarding Sting at this point is this: Popularity is one thing, but can he prove to us that he's still the same great wrestler he was for so many years? He's still a young man, and he's still obviously in great shape, but he did take about six months off, and not everyone is able to shake off ring rust easily. We hope to be able to put Sting back in the overall Top 10 sometime very soon.

On the flip side, **Bret Hart** drops out of the Most Popular ratings for this issue.

You probably heard the things he said on the March 17 edition of *Monday Night Raw* after he lost to WWF champ **"Psycho" Sid Vicious** in a steel cage match, thanks to the interference of **The Undertaker**. He screamed at **Vince McMahon**, cursed on national TV, and beat up WWF Hall of Famer **Pat Patterson** when Patterson tried to calm him down. McMahon was very upset with the "Hitman" and called him "dirty" and "rotten" on the air.

It is certainly very easy to understand why Bret was so frustrated. He lost a World title match to Sid in December when **Shawn Michaels** inadvertently interfered, would have won the Royal Rumble outright had **Steve Austin** not re-entered the ring after Bret eliminated him, then, after winning the vacant WWF title in February, lost the belt to Sid a night later after Austin smashed him with a chair while he had Sid in the "sharpshooter."

He doesn't think there's any justice in the WWF. Sorry, but we don't think all of this *injustice* justifies any of Bret's actions on March 17 or at WrestleMania or the night after WrestleMania. This is a man who used to be so proud of the fact that he was a great role model. We've placed him right at the top of our Most Hated rankings.

This 'n' that. Don't look for **Eddy Guerrero** in this month's WCW ratings (or the overall Top 10), but he hasn't disappeared just because he lost the U.S. title to **Dean Malenko** at *Uncensored*. We still consider Guerrero to be one of the best all-around athletes in WCW, but he had to take some time off after *Uncensored* because he suffered a torn pectoral muscle.

Don't be surprised if **Jacquelyn** makes her first appearance in the WCW top 10 soon. That's not a joke.

Sources inside WCW tell us that the former **Miss Texas** (who made several appearances in the USWA top 10 when she was feuding with **Jamie Dundee**—now **J.C. Ice**) in 1993) requested a match with a male WCW wrestler (any male wrestler) for *Uncensored*, but that promoters could not find a willing opponent. We think there

might a few men in WCW she'd have a chance of upsetting, but we won't name names.

For those of you who have complained to us that we haven't ranked **The Road Warriors** high enough in our tag team ratings since they returned to the WWF, we'll give you the same explanation WWF President **Gorilla Monsoon** gave to **Animal** and **Hawk** when they requested an immediate title shot.

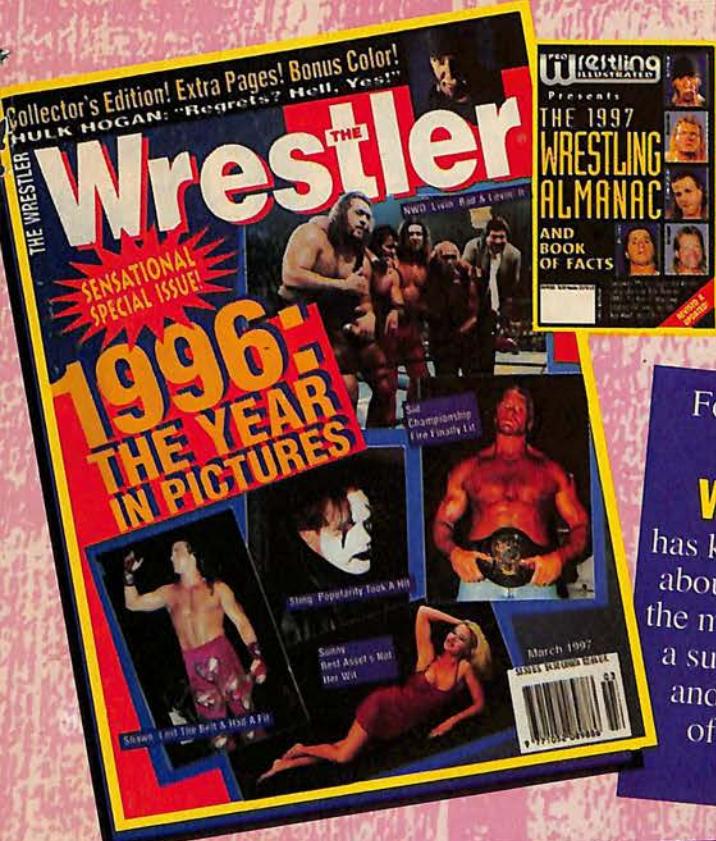
They must first prove that they're worthy of such a high ranking. We know all about their past accomplishments, and they might very well be better than teams such as **Harlem Heat**, **The Barbarian** and **Meng**, and **Bubba Ray** and **D-Von Dudley** (the new ECW tag team champs), but we want to see them win some key matches before we advance them to near the top of the ratings.

That's it for now. As always, if you have questions or comments, we want to hear them. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.



Jacquelyn

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